WEA MISSION COMMISSION CONSULTATION

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The Majority world is not replacing the western mission, it is joining it
Category: Church: World

Another set of notes from a conference; with the same caveats as yesterday; my notes may not have captured what the speaker intended to say and I may (or may not) agree with everything written below.

The World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission Global Consultation was held in a rather swish hotel in Panama (they had booked somewhere cheaper, but ended up getting a much nicer hotel at the original price).

General Thoughts/Notes

- This is my third mission commission event, and I feel more at ease with this group now that I've made a number of friends.
- I love meeting with such an international group - though there was a distinct lack of Francophone Africans.
- The consultation was celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Panama missionary congress, something which is not well enough known in the UK (to be fair, we were otherwise occupied at that point).
- I very much appreciated the content of the plenary sessions, but the discussion questions were not always well thought through. I'm not sure in what way this was a 'consultation' rather than a 'conference'.
- Allowing Spanish speakers to speak in their own language with translation provided into English was a very positive move in a global meeting. It's a shame that more Hispanophones did not take advantage of this (for the record, I don't speak Spanish). We need to take positive steps to break the hegemony of the English language in international Christian gatherings.
- The Panama Canal is impressive!

Samuel Escobar: Mission from the Periphery

- Started off by referring to two books in Portuguese which tell the story of their own missionary work and reflect on it critically
    - Missiology must always be self-critical
- Costas applied the idea of centre and periphery to missiology
    - In Edinburgh 1910: Europe was the centre
        - Africa and Asia were mission fields
        - Latin America was a problem because it was catholic
            - Americans wanted to evangelise L America, but Anglicans refused
        - First world war quested the authenticity of Christianity in Europe.
            - Forced a rethink of the notion of national churches
            - The USA is the first modern country not to have a national church

        - At Panama 1916, the US was the centre and Latin America the periphery
            - Those who reflected critically realised they had to separate the national interest of the USA from missionary work
            - In the catholic world, people knew the Christ child and the crucifixion, but nothing between
                - A real need for the Gospels.
            - Looking forward
                - Crisis of Christendom in Europe
                - Growth of church in the majority world
                - Growth of missionary initiative and action
            - Missionary statistics

Origin	1990	2000	% growth
North	62,297	70,323	12
South	6,634	20,570	210

- There is a growing missionary movement from places that used to be mission fields eg Brazil and Korea
- Need creative partnerships in declining Christendom
    - Eg Chinese diaspora in Spain
    - Spanish speaking churches in Germany
    - God is using diaspora to promote mission
    - Missionary work is not only being done by professional missionaries
    - Edinburgh 190 and Panama 1916 sound triumphalistic today.
    - Edinburgh used lots of military metaphors
    - Missionaries from the periphery seem more open to self criticism
    - Need to move beyond the competitive world market approach to mission
    - We need to return to biblical patterns, understood with historical awareness
    - The protestant missionary movement in Latin America encouhtered Catholicism in a way that forced it to become self-critical
        - In Latin America you find books on theology and the Bible in Catholic book shops and self-help books in protestant ones!
    - There is much to be done in missionary work in post-christendom Europe

Valdir Seuernagel

- A missiological Road Map
    - The full paper is online
- It is not our mission, it is Godâ€™s so when we move into mission we move into Godâ€™s

presence
- Mission is doxology â€“ the missio Dei
    - Mission is God coming to us, bringing life
    - When God speaks to us, he does so through Scripture
        - Itâ€™s all about Jesus
    - What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus today?
        - Need to go back to the Gospels and let their narratives speak to us
            - We are sent as Jesus was sent
            - Look at the sending of the 72 in Luke 10
                - A paradigm for our mission
                - Starts with prayer
                    - In prayer we hear God say that he loves us
                    - As the beloved of God, we have the privilege to pray for workers
                - We are sent out as sheep among wolves into a world of evil
                    - We see this in the life of Jesus
                    - He is the good shepherd and protects his sheep
                    - Wolves are dangerous
                    - If we donâ€™t go out, the wolves win
                    - Godâ€™s kingdom is a kingdom of peace which challenges the wolves
                    - Mission is proclaiming peace in a world of wolves
                - The disciples reported back to Jesus
                    - Never forget to return to him
                    - To come back to Jesus is to remember that everything is a gift from God
                - Luke Starts with prayer and ends with prayer

Samuel PagÃ¡n

- How the Bible impacted Panama 1916 and its relevance for us
    - There are 1000s of pages of documents from Panama 1916
        - The Bible was used in an important way
    - According to Luther the Bible is alive
    - Kant says that the Bible is important to humanity
    - Isaiah reminds us that Godâ€™s word endures for ever
    - 1916 discussions were all based on Scripture
        - the conference established theological centres and libraries across Latin America â€“ revolutionary at the time
        - We need to reemphasize the use of scripture as an evangelistic enterprise

        - We have to incentivise the organisation of Bible studies
        - We need new translations of the Scriptures
            - We need to emphasize the contextual reading of Scripture
        - Poverty was a problem in 1916 and still is today
        - Corruption is a bigger problem today than then
        - In the C21 we have the wisdom of preceding generations

Patrick Fung: Cooperation in a Polycentric world

- The Majority world is not replacing the western mission, it is joining it
- Need to reflect on partnership in the light of the Trinity
    - Fellowship
    - Contribution
    - Participation
    - Sharing
    - Partnership

Jehu Hanciles: Engaging the Global Landscape

- Are we in the best of times or the worst of times?
    - There is a lot of conflict
    - But life expectancy is increasing
- Aspects of Global landscape crucial to mission
    - Our identity as a global church
        - We tend to view the world in utilitarian terms
        - No other movement has touched the world globally the way the church has
    - The indispensability of the local
        - The local and global are mutually dependent
        - The church grows and roots itself in local terms
    - Population growth and a shared planet
    - Violence and a hostility to religion
    - Global Migration movements
        - The largest group of migrants are Christians (49%) Muslims make up 27%.