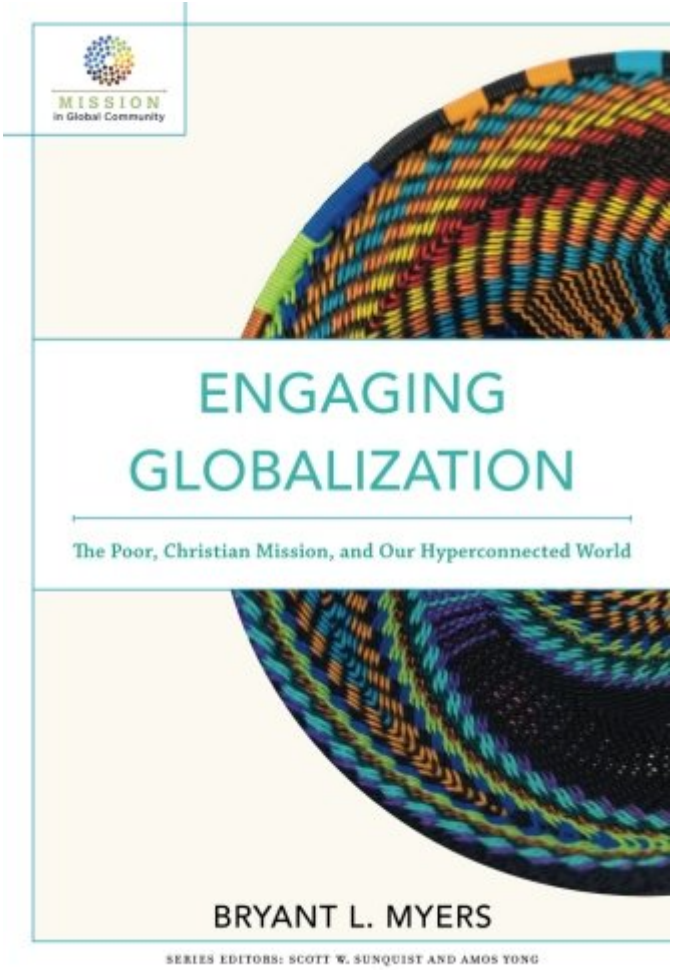
SOME QUOTES ON GLOBALISATION

Posted on January 16, 2018 by Eddie

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Category: Mission

I have been thoroughly enjoyingÂ Engaging Globalization: The Poor, Christian Mission, And Our Hyperconnected World (Mission In Global Community)Â This is a book which anyone interested in cross-cultural or world mission must have on their reading list. I'll do a fuller review later, but for now, here are some quotes that might get you thinking.



> *A second reason for the lack of a Christian contribution to development theory and practice is that churches and Christians tend to delegate their development efforts to Christian development agencies, such as Tearfund, World Relief, Food for the Hungry, and World Vision International, or to Christian agencies with a focus on certain sectors, such as Opportunity International in microfinance and Lifewater International with its focus on water, sanitation, and hygiene. While these activists and agencies do sometimes write and even do research, they too limit their focus to the micro level of development programming. Often their engagement with secular development theory and research is uneven. This is because they, like the churches, tend to remain within our Christian subculture, which is largely disconnected from secular thinking and experimentation. Too often Christian development folk only meet with other Christian development folk. The final reason is also understandable. Most Christians in the academic world are either theologians who have little contact with a practical discipline like development studies, or they work in the social sciences of anthropology, sociology, or psychology. These social sciences have the most potential for helping the church function competently in the world (although churches do not always avail themselves of this knowledge). The net result is that very few Christians working within the development studies discipline feel free enough to bring their theology to the table.*

> *The secular views of the causes of poverty do not seem sufficiently robust. They point to bad and unjust behaviors of individuals and social systems but have no compelling explanation*

as to the origins of this behaviorâ€"ignorance alone just doesnâ€™t seem adequate. Without an adequate explanation, solutions are hard. Education aloneâ€"modernityâ€™s proposed solution to most social problemsâ€"doesnâ€™t seem capable of improving the whole of the human condition.

We need to remind ourselves that Christianity is an atypical globalism in that it always localizes. Through translation of the Bible and local theologizing, this globalism makes its home fully everywhere and anywhere, in every language and in every cultural setting. The consequence is that, while Christianity makes a global claim, does mission everywhere, and unites all Christians, it does not create cultural homogeneity as does economic globalization and do other globalisms such as Islam.

The implications of the center of gravity of the church moving to the Global South are considerable. We need to understand that the great majority of our Southern brothers and sisters are poor and persecuted. These majority-world Christians are generally more theologically and morally conservative than Western Christians, with the possible exception of American conservative evangelicals. They are much more comfortable with the supernatural and have a worldview closer to that of the Bible. This often creates confusion in conversations with Christians from the West.

This new situation also has consequences for how we think about mission. The most obvious is that mission is no longer a Western monopoly or privilege. Nor can non-Western churches be thought of as extensions of Western missionary efforts; they are self-acting agents of mission and increasingly are the major contributor to global missions. Again, mission from everywhere to everyone.

Second, the theological questions are not the same. In the modern and largely secular West, the critical theological issues focus on gender and sexuality, the dangers of consumption and materialism, and the challenges of multiculturalism and pluralism. In the Global South, the pressing theological questions are different: morality and holiness, poverty and justice, political violence, the rule of law, corruption, and coexistence with primal or traditional religion. To make this more complex, the two parts of the Christian world tend to read their Bibles differently. In a heated discussion at a global meeting of Anglicans from around the world on the topic of sexuality, an African bishop asked his Episcopalian colleague in exasperation: â€œIf you donâ€™t believe the Scriptures, why did you bring them to us in the first place?â€

> *Finally, this shift in the center of theological thinking may hold out hope to the Western church and its captivity to the two-tiered, material-spiritual worldview that I have referred to repeatedly in this book. The churches and theologians of the Global South are not as deeply captive to this worldview, even though exposed to it through their experiences with Western education. I suspect that this is one of the reasons that the Pentecostal movement has taken root so quickly and pervasively. Even most Protestant and Catholic churches in Africa are sympathetic to a seamlessly integrated material and spiritual world. Perhaps it will be our brothers and sisters in the Global South who will help us in the West recover the biblical vision of such a world.*

> *This raises important questions for pastors, students, and academics. Whose material are you reading? What voices are you listening to? Are Kwame Bediako, Ogbo Kalu, Lamin Sanneh, Mercy Oduyoye, Emmanuel Katongole, Nimi Wariboko, RenÃ© Padilla, Samuel Escobar, Roberto Goizueta, Justo GonzÃilez, Ruth Padilla DeBorst, Hwa Yung, Vinoth Ramachandra, Melba Maggay, Andrew Sung Park, Martin Luther King Jr., and Howard Thurman on your reading list?*