CHRISTIANITY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Posted on July 3, 2018 by Eddie

A few quotes from a very good book.
Category: Quotes

I am thoroughly enjoying the new book by Professor Brian Stanley,Â Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History. It's not yet available in paperback, so it isn't cheap, but it's worth every penny. I'll do a proper write up in a few days when I finish it, but I thought I'd just give a few quotes without comment to give you a feel for the thing.

> *As Bible translations into a host of non-European vernacular languages multiplied in the course of the twentieth century, the Bible ceased to be a European book. Or, to be more accurate, it finally became recognized as what it always had been - a book (or library of books) rooted in the Semitic cultures of western Asia and whose central themes resonated with the everyday concerns of many "primal" peoples. For those who lived in critical proximity to disease, hunger, poverty, social dislocation, and even exile, the biblical narratives were no alien story. The Hebrew Bible and the Gospels depicted scenarios that were part of the regular experience of many non-European peoples. Furthermore, they recorded narratives of national exodus from colonial captivity and miraculous restoration to the homeland, stories of hope and healing and evil forces vanquished (p.60)*

> *Much of the regular growth of the churches in Africa, Asia, and Oceania in this century was the result of the unspectacular witness of indigenous leaders of minimal theological education but abundant zeal... (p.60)*

> *If Russia and its former satellite states today are any less Christian than they were before 1917, the cause is more likely to be related to globalizing forces disseminating Western cultural indifference to religion than to earlier communist efforts to eliminate it. (p.99)*

> *Whereas in Englandnsecularization has been seen in the abandonment of the Churches - as in other European countries - in America it has been seen in the absorption of the Churches by the society, and their loss of distinctive religious content. Hence Steve Bruce explains the growth of conservative Christianity in postwar American society by reference to the success of evangelical churches in reinventing their historic message as a recipe for individual fulfilment and personal growth. Many late twentieth-century Americans were preoccupied with cosseting their own inner well-being and enhancing their outer material prosperity, and evangelical churches offered a commodified religious package neatly tailored to these demands of the popular market. (p.119)*

Obviously, these quotes are taken out of context and so lack the justifying arguments that lead up to them. Please do read the whole book to get a full taste of what he is saying.