

3rd Lausanne Congress Reflection

I have a favourite little slice of the Bible from the book of Job:

*These are but the outer fringe of his works;
how faint the whisper we hear of him!
Who then can understand the thunder of his power?"*

Job 26:14

It reminds me that even when I think I have a grip on who God is and what he is about, I have glimpsed only a small corner of all that God is – and even that much is, frankly, overwhelming and beyond my comprehension, causing me to cry again “How great is our God!”

At the World Congress on Evangelization, this sense of scope was immense. The scope of how God is at work across the face of the earth; the scope of diversity of gospel proclamations in word and action, art and compassion, image and context, message and incarnation; the scope of brokenness and need, and the scope of God’s heart of love, justice and healing for the world expressed through the body of Christ, wounded, sacrificed and yet resurrected daily throughout the world.

3 images endure

The gracious but strong call to account of the Western missionary-sending church by Christian leaders in Africa; warmly grateful to have received the gospel, but now also astutely evaluating the outcome of our colonial and enlightenment conditioned methodologies, they testify to the thinness of our propositional gospel, and speak with grief of the moral and political fruit it has borne; including syncretism and genocide. A fresh call to make disciples (not converts) in line with Jesus’ great commission is echoed back from the majority world.

An Indian woman, a former muslim, who is now a pastor of a Pentecostal church which worships using all of the cultural forms of Islam, but proclaims Jesus as Lord, and is full of the Holy Spirit. (How many systems of patriarchy does that fly against!)

Sharing communion with 4500 brothers and sisters from almost 200 countries in rich sound, image, choreography and liturgy reframed what forgiveness looks like, and the possibilities of reconciliation.

“**God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself**” - the explicit theme throughout the Congress - found embodiment for me in these reconciliations - of evangelism and discipleship, content and context, word and deed.

Grace and peace,
Beth