

Pessimistic Christianity

*Two men in a prison cell, looking through the bars
One only saw the darkness, the other saw the stars.*

The story is told of that great missionary Hudson Taylor, who when he could not influence enough young men to follow in his footsteps in taking the Gospel message to China, declared in a fit of pique, “Then I will return myself!” An Anglican clergyman wrote to the disgruntled missionary, “Hudson, have you gazed into the Saviour’s face recently; seen Him seated on His throne in the heavenlies? There are no worry lines upon His brow, no anxious thoughts cross His mind – and He is far more concerned about China than you can ever be!”

Our secular media is full of news of the demise of the church in the west, having lots of ‘statistics’ to prove it. Sadly, such ‘news’ is also all that some believers read/hear in the Christian media. It is right that we should be motivated to pray for the persecuted church but surely, it is also right that we should rejoice in the church triumphant, often in the same countries. I have been told several times in recent weeks that Islam will soon overrun UK and that Canada and America cannot be far behind. It appears that God has lost control or is disinterested in intervening in our sorry world. Surely, **if** Islam should overrun the west, it would only be in God’s will, in order to purify His church (*‘against which the gates of Hell cannot stand’*).

I do not expect the world’s media to tell of the multitude of things the Lord is doing in all parts of the world, but surely our Christian media should be trumpeting it abroad! For example, we are told that if one converts from Islam to Christianity in IRAN, he may be beheaded. Few ask why this law was enacted at the end of 2008. Maybe it is because the regime is concerned, since “over 1,000,000 Iranians have converted since the Cultural Revolution and 1000 people a month are writing to us seeking to know how to become Christians”. Dr Lazarus Yeghnazar of 222 ministries. Find him on Google search.

Further, in my homeland of Wales, the Anglican church has 200 vicars less today than 30 years ago (as the secular media is quick to point out) BUT the truly ‘evangelical’ vicars has risen in number from less than 10 to more than 60 in the same time (Canon Stuart Bell of St Michael’s, Aberystwyth).

Yes, the church is growing rapidly and openly in Africa and Latin America; it is also growing rapidly and underground in Asia and the Muslim East. To the discerning eye, many good things are happening in many parts of the UK also. For example, in my home town, there was no evangelical church witness when I became a believer 50 years ago; today there is a thriving Baptist church with an ongoing outreach program, a new Pentecostal church plant and a vicar sympathetic to the Gospel.

Believers, lift up your eyes! The king is still on His throne! He is doing great things, even in the nations of the west. Do not expect the world’s media to tell you this – they are blind to such things. However, redeemed people can look into the darkness and see the stars. Open our eyes, Lord!

I sense the falling of the early rain. O Lord, send the floods upon us again!