“Showing up”

Hannes Koornhof

Matt. 5:13-16

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In die tyd toe Jesus dit gesê het, was sout se hoof-funksie om te reinig en om bederf [verrotting] te keer. Lig verdryf duisternis, wys die pad en gee hoop. Dit moet die waarde wees wat volgelinge van Jesus in die samelewing het - toe en nou! Die vraag is: is dit so? Word Christene so ervaar?

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Hierdie boek ontleed en bespreek navorsing wat in 2007 in die VSA gedoen is oor *“what a new generation thinks about Christianity... and why it matters.”* Die drie mees algemene persepsies wat jongmense in die VSA van Christene het, het die studie bevind, is dat Christene ervaar word as anti-homoseksueel, as veroordelend [“judgmental”] en as skynheilig. Verder nog: Christene is uit pas met die werklikheid, hulle is onsensitief vir ander mense en hulle is veroordelend teenoor ander godsdienste. Die konklusie: “Christianity has an image problem.”

Is ons anders? Het mense in Suid-Afrika ’n meer positiewe persepsie en ervaring van Christene? Word Christene se invloed in die samelewing ervaar soos dié van sout en van lig - iets waarsonder die samelewing en wêreld baie slegter af sou wees?

“Hoe kan dit verander?”, vra die skrywers

- Van “Christians say one thing but live something entirely different” na *“Christians are transparent about their flaws and act first, talk second.”*
- Van “Christians show contempt for gays and lesbians” na *“Christians show compassion and love to all people, regardless of their lifestyle.”*
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- Van “Christians are boring, un-intelligent, old-fashioned, and out of touch with reality” na *“Christians are engaged, informed, and offer sophisticated responses to the issues people face.”*

*** Unchristian, David Kinneman and Gabe Lyons. Barna Group, 2007*

The NEXT Christians
Dieselfde instituut publiseer drie jaar later nog 'n studie onder die titel ***"The NEXT Christians: How a New Generation is restoring the faith."*** Dit vertel verhale van jong Christene wat die post-Christendom wêreld waarin ons vandag lewe, aanvaar en probeer om konstruktief en kreatief sout en lig te wees – juis as navolgers van Jesus Christus.

Hulle probeer om "restorers" te wees: mense wat met hulle lewens en gedrag hierdie wêreld help herstel sodat dit kan wees wat God bedoel het. Hulle verstaan dat "sout en lig wees" veral te make het met lewenstyl en om op 'n positiewe manier God se liefde en genade en geregtigheid in die wêreld in te dra.

"The way things ought to be becomes the driving mechanism behind

- *Why they care*
- *Why they show up*
- *Where they work*
- *Who they spend time with*
- *When they speak*
- *And more important, when they shut up*

[The NEXT Christians, Gabe Lyons, 2010, p 66]

In plaas van die donkerte te vloek, steek hulle liewer kerse aan.
Dit is die manier, sê Gabe Lyons, hoe die "next Christians" in hul konteks betrokke is. Hulle is "creators, not critics", hulle kies doelbewus "engagement over condem-nation", "grace over judgment", "courage over comfort", "faithfulness over reputation". Hulle lewens "is postured by prayer, instead of power". Hulle *maak* tyd om te bly drink uit die Bybel as Bron vir hulle lewens.

"As culture drives the masses to-ward a me-centered existence, the practice of prayer is posturing the next Christians to remember who really sits at the center of their lives and faith."

"Back when we did these big crusades in football stadiums and arenas, the Holy Spirit was really moving – and people were coming to Christ as we preached the Word of God... But today, I sense something different happening. I see evidence that the Holy Spirit is working in a new way. He's moving through people where they work and through one-on-one relationships to accomplish great things. They are demon-strating God's love to those around them, not just with words, but in deed."
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The next Christians ... don't always get it right, but they are seeking to follow the way of Jesus wherever they show up. And as they try to faithfully live in this way, they paint a picture to a curious world of an alternative way of living. Their lives are pointing to a better way forward for those inquisitive enough to notice.

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