MISSION AND THE ELECTION 1: PROCLAMATION

Posted on April 15, 2010 by Eddie

Categories: Mission, Politics

There has been a fair bit of chatter about the upcoming election in the UK in the Christian blogsphere. Mouse has helpfully summarised who is saying what. I thought I would try and take a slightly different tack by examining the election through the grid of Christian mission. Of course, that then opens up a whole debate about what I mean by mission. In order to keep things simple, I'm going to use the Five Marks of Mission as my definition. I still think this is the most helpful, concise summary of the teaching of the Bible as a whole on mission that I can find.

You can find discussion of the five marks here. They are.

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

To be honest, I don't see that an election of any of the major parties would make a significant difference to the ability of the church t proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

There has been a fair bit hoo-ha in the press about Christians not being able to wear crosses or crucifixes at work, but while I might feel sympathy for the individual, wearing a piece of jewellery is not essential to expressing Christian faith. Equally, there has been some concern about the ability of Christians to express their views on issues of sexuality and lifestyle orientation. Once again, these are concerning, but they don't fundamentally restrict our ability to talk about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

If anything, the atheist bus campaign and the responses to it, show that Christians have a good deal of freedom to engage in discussion in the public space, as long as they go about it wisely.

It is undoubtedly true that there are now some restrictions on Christian witness that did not exist in previous years. Public Order legislation restricts some sorts of street preaching and open-air witness, discrimination legislation makes it harder to engage in strident debate with other religious faiths (while, it sometimes seems that Christians are fair game) and so on. However, these are all part of larger societal changes and I do not see that any of the major political parties are addressing these issues either positively or negatively.