MISSION AND THE ELECTION 2: NURTURING BELIEVERS

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This is the second in a series which looks at the UK election through the grid of the Five Marks of Mission.

To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.

I don't see anything that any of the parties are planning to do which will seriously impinge on the ability of the church to teach, baptise and nurture believers, so we can breath easily on this one - sort of.

However, it has to be admitted that in many ways it is more difficult to be a Christian disciple today than it was a number of years ago. This is not because of government legislation *per se* but more due to the fact that our society has become increasingly materialistic and sex-obsessed. It is difficult to focus on 'things unseen', when the 'things see' are clamouring quite so loudly for attention. Lust, be it for an iPad, a better mortgage rate, or a digitally enhanced model can become all consuming and make it very difficult to follow Christ as wholeheartedly as we might wish. Temptation has always been with us, but it is far more professional these days!

We cannot expect any of the political parties to do anything about these issues. Growing materialism and the free availability of sex are part of a huge cultural shift in which all of society is complicit. Our politicians are representatives of a society which wants more toys, which wants more money and which wants to be distracted from thinking about issues of life and death. Because they are part of the problem, we cannot expect that they will fix it. There is only so much that politicians can do, and regulating the moral and cultural framework of the whole Western world is simply beyond them.

If society has changed, and if it is harder to be a disciple in this context, then it is up to Christians to contextualise the Gospel effectively and to learn to deal with the situation. We also need to take responsibility for the way in which society has changed. It is no use blaming politicians for a shifting moral and spiritual climate: we are the ones who are supposed to be salt and light, not them.