IS IT TIME TO STOP SENDING MISSIONARIES FROM THE WEST?

Posted on April 21, 2010 by Eddie

Category: Observations

Onesimus raises this thorny question in his latest blog post. Some of his observations certainly give plenty of cause for reflection.

> *In the mythology of North American fundamentalism and Western Evangelicalism, we missionaries are the heroes. We've given up our comfortable lives and left family and friends and offered ourselves to bring the light of the gospel to benighted peoples across the globe. We of the missionary slide show/now powerpoint presentation, we of the missionary letters telling stories of our triumphs and sorrows... We always seem to be teetering on the brink of some ministry-threatening catastrophe, skillfully presented to elicit yet more prayer support. People regularly marvel at how we could have taken our children from here (land of milk and honey) and raised them there (the dangerous howling wilderness) and are astonished when they discover that our teenagers can carry on a meaningful conversation with adults. (read the whole post)*

However, the real insight in this post comes from an article which Onesmimus links to. In this, a Kenyan Christian shares some of her thoughts on the way in which some missionaries communicate.

> > *Pray for finances: we will be going around speaking in an effort to raise support and will have to return twice a year to do the same.*
>
> *oh yes:*
>
> > *I have to buy and pack everything I need for 10 years in a crate. Its 10 by 20ft and will cost $6,000 to transport. We'll be packing furniture, washer/dryer, mattress, etc.*
>
> *Wow, i know its the third world and everything but the last time i checked, we like have shopping malls and actually they stock mattresses. Vocabulary to consider; Nakumatt. Oh dear but there is a problem with that:*
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> > *pray for us because i dont know if i can trust the milk we buy in those pouches. I dont know if it was delivered by donkey.*
> >
> > *Pray for us because we will have to live out of suitcases for a few weeks with lounge chairs for furniture.*
>
> *Why, dont you know we still swing around in the trees? You should see where your plane will*

> *land....its in the forest complete with lions and everything!..*
>
> *Now i have played host for western short termers for a while. I have been mentored by and continue to maintain friendships with both short term and long term imperfect missionaries that i love and respect. However, i have say that this is the first time someone has rubbed me the wrong way quite effectively their ignorance and insensitivity.*
>
> *The fact is that on the friends lists of this couple are the people they will minister with/to. The chances that these people did not read these posts, fast or slow internet, is slim to none courtesy of a little gadget called the mobile phone which (drumrolls please) is used to access facebook. Gasp. Imagine that. Now, I don't know what is worse; that they read the posts and were not offended or that they did and took offence.*

Anyone who is involved in sending missionaries overseas should read this article.