INSPIRATION OR PERSPIRATION?

Posted on December 14, 2010 by Eddie

Category: Observations

Christians are often bothered by the question of how much effort they should put into preparing and organising Gospel work. There seem to be two schools of thought; the one says that you don't really need to prepare, you should just trust the Spirit to inspire you when the time comes and the other says that you need to prepare as much as you can.

Let me quickly say that I'm referring here to every-day, common or garden preparation, not the special sort of case that Jesus mentions in Mark 13:11

> *But when you are arrested and stand trial, donâ€™t worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit.*

I think that we can get some insight into how God wants to work in us through the way that he inspired the Scriptures. Take for example the first four verses of Luke's Gospel.

> *Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us.Â They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write a careful account for you, most honorable Theophilus,Â so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.*

The Spirit inspired Luke, but it still involved him in a lot of hard work. You can imagine him at his desk, comparing the scrolls and manuscripts and searching his own memory to come up with a definitive life story of Jesus. John, on the other hand, had it rather easy (Revelation 1:19):

> *Write down what you have seenâ€"both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen*

John had to simply observe what he was shown in a vision and write it down. Compared to the hard work that Luke had to put in, it was reletively easy. That being said, I think I would probably have preferred Luke's way of working, myself.

But the thing is that God used both of these methods: hard work and research for Luke and an amazing revelation for John. There is no right and wrong way. We need the hard work, the graft of comparing sources and reading through things, but we also need those moments of inspiration when God speaks to us, or speaks through us without any forethought or foreknowledge ourselves.

Just a thought.