MEMORIES OF MISSIONARIES

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Category: Observations

Missionaries were part of the wallpaper of my childhood. From time to time there would be a strange adult at our weeknight supper table and I would be introduced to Miss X who was a missionary in some far-flung country. They seemed to be a harmless enough bunch of people, a little dull and strangely dressed, perhaps, but they were unlikely to cause any problems. However, it was clear from my mother's reaction that I was supposed to regard these slightly dishevelled people with a great deal of awe and admiration. They were missionaries and they were labourers in God's harvest. I should feel privileged that they were clearing up the dessert before I could have seconds!

Over the years, I met a large number of these people. They would regularly turn up at Church youth group or University CU meetings to tell us tales of derring-do on the mission field. Missionary talks were predictable; their slide set would always end up with a sunset and at some point in the talk they would say, "I may be a missionary, but I'm an ordinary person, just like you" (at which point everyone in the room would thing "you are fooling no one but yourself".

In my experience missionaries were a little eccentric, but like the earth in the Hitch-Hikers Guide, they were "mostly harmless".

This may, or may not, form part of my talk at the Global Connections' Thinking Mission Forum on May 25.