ONESIMUS CHEATS AND THEN PUTS THE BOOT IN

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Category: Mission

I find it increasingly difficult to come up with anything new to write on this blog and I'm often tempted to recycle a post from the past. Sometimes, I write something that seems new and fresh, only to find that I had posted something almost exactly the same in 2006. Anyway, Onesimus (who was my blogger of the year in 2010) has recently started a new blog and on it, he has reposted something from a few years back. That's cheating!

However, I'm prepared to forgive him, because this recycled post is very, very thought provoking, especially for those of us who work in Western mission agencies. The post is a strong critique of much missionary practice and it doesn't make very comfortable reading. The temptation might be simply to ignore criticism of this type, but when someone of the author's background and experience writes on this subject, we do well to read what he says.

Bill (Onesimus' real name) makes three key points, which I will highlight here. In later posts, I'd like to look in more detail at what he says:

> *First, our continuing presence as mission organizations actively facilitates a church-killing dependence among the Christians we are supposedly trying to help.*
>
> *Secondly, this sort of dynamic works the other way, too.Â There are too many Western mission organizations and NGOs who, except for spiritualized lingo, have become little more than giant corporations...*
>
> *Thirdly, it is long past time for local Christians to take responsibility for their own churches and training and programs.*

From these three points, he builds to a devastating conclusion:

> *Â Our imported business models of ministry success have persuaded too many non-Western Christians that the cross can finally be avoided and that victory is ours for the grasping.Â But this sort of hyper-over-realized eschatology is little more than the â€˜American Dreamâ€™ writ large, which actually is one of the devilâ€™s more effective delusions.*

I would encourage anyone with an interest in the missionary world to read Bill's whole post. I don't agree with everything he writes, but I find much of it resonates with my own experience. Even where I don't agree, the issues he raises are important.

As I said, I hope to come back to look at this in more detail in later posts.