THERE IS ALWAYS ONE

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Category: Bible & Mission

One of the problems with being a blogger is that no matter how hard you work to write a post, there is always the possibility that someone will come along and write a funnier, more erudite, or just simply better on the same subject. If like me you blog on the Bible and mission, it is likely that the person who writes a better post will be Mark Woodward or, in this case, Â Simon Cozens.

> *Iâ€™ve been following, with a little bemusement, Eddieâ€™s recentÂ series of postsÂ reflecting onÂ Onesimusâ€™ post about dependence and toxicity in mission. Bemusement for two reasons: first, because the mission community has had exactly this discussion, up to and including the calls for moratorium, many times before; (â€œWhither Mission?â€ , in Bosch chapter 13, lists a number of them.) it may be that we need these old discussions again because the problems have not been solved, but that leads my to my second reason for bemusement: becauseâ€"and maybe I am particularly blessed hereâ€"I simply donâ€™t recognise Onesimusâ€™ concerns in my own experience of mission.*

You should read the whole of Simon's post, which does an excellent job of examining some of the issues surrounding some current approaches to Christian mission. In particular he takes a hard look at the notion of missionary as teacher...

> *You can teach English, you can teach Korean, you can teach cookery, culture, you can teach lots of things, none of which are even faintly related to what youâ€™re here for which is presumably to teach the Bible, but hey, if thatâ€™s the only way you can think of to actually get to know new people then, well, whatever floats your boat.*

He approaches the subject from the point of view of post-colonialism and post-modernism...

> *Postmodernism began, at least for Foucault, with an investigation into the nature of power; any message that someone gives is also a statement about who has power over whom. And while we love to talk about leadership in churches and in mission, we really donâ€™t like to talk about power. Jesusâ€™ whole life and death was a demonstration that the power of God is made perfect in weakness. The Devil tempted him to accomplish his mission through asserting power, and he resisted. And yet how often in mission do we succumb to the same temptation. So we teach, because it puts us in a position of control, where we can determine the curriculum and decide when we whip out the Bibles, because that way we can ask the questions and decide the correct answers and the students have no choice in the matter. Oh, we might do it very gently at the time, because power often doesnâ€™t look like power. But if Iâ€™m the teacher and youâ€™re the student, you bet that in many ways Iâ€™m the one with the power.*
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> *Would it kill us, just once in a while, to do mission from a position of weakness? You know,*

> *like Jesus did? To walk into a room andÂ notbe the one in charge? Would that beÂ OK? Could we give it a try?*

In the next day or so, I'll post another example of someone improving one of my posts.