MISSION PLANNING AND TACTICS

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The British church must avoid the trap of techniques and tactics. Mission is firstly listening to God and following him: Daniel BourdannÃ©
Category: Observations

Over the next few days, I'm going to carry on commenting on the recent Global Connections conference. However, at a week's distance, it is hard to remember all of the details, so I'm going to pick up on a few of the tweets I sent during the two days. Here is a starter:

Eddie Arthurâ€ @kouya

The British church must avoid the trap of techniques and tactics. Mission is firstly listening to God and following him @Bourdanne #GCC2014

This was more or less a direct quote from Daniel BourdannÃ© of IFES and it highlights an issue which we've returned to on a number of occasions on Kouyanet. It is important to note that this is not about a binary division; listening to God or techniques and tactics, it is about where we place our emphasis. My experience, is that, all too often, we get that balance wrong and other writers have highlighted this too; let me give a few examples.

In an earlier post on this subject I quoted Alan Roxborough:

> *Leaders who want to cultivate missional communities in transition must set aside goal-setting and strategic planning as their primary model.*

Don Carson, also has some interesting thoughts on the subject, which I highlighted here:

> *We depend on plans, programs, vision statementsâ€“but somewhere along the way we have succumbed to the temptation to displace the foolishness of the cross with the wisdom of strategic planning.*

I believe that there are many reasons why we have prioritised planning techniques over listening to God and it is well worth reading the section in David Smith's excellent bookÂ Against the streamÂ on this subject. But I'll just make a couple of observations.

- Missionaries and mission agencies are by nature activists. We do things. We react badly to the time it takes to reflect on our situation and to listen to God's voice.
- I think it is easy to be seduced by the promises of secular planning techniques; especially when they promise success, which is easier than all of that tedious suffering and sacrifice.
- We are just too darn busy. In my summing up at the Global Connections conference, I challenged the group to consider what current activities they would abandon in order to make a priority to listening to God. It's easy to say that we want to take time to hear God's voice, but there are reports to be filed, deadlines to be met and meetings to be scheduled.

I believe that Daniel's seemingly innocuous statement, was actually a call to radically reorder the way we run our agencies and churches.

If you want to listen to the talks from the GC conference yourself, you can do so here. If you don't have time to do so (shame on you), then John Stevens has provided a good summary of what Daniel said on his blog.