WHAT PRICE OUR FOUNDATION STORIES?

Posted on June 23, 2014 by Eddie

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Category: Observations

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Most Christian organisations can trace their history back to a founder who broke ranks with the established order and set up a brand new ministry. Their websites often have a section devoted to their early days and the independent, quirky, but godly person who started the whole organisation going. We like our foundation stories.

However, I wonder whether or not a reverence for our founders, for our traditions and histories can be a hindrance when it comes to us going where it is God wants us today. I, for one, am convinced that we have too many mission agencies in the UK and that we need to address this sooner rather than later. The problem is, I don't see how organisations with a strong foundation story can easily merge or combine their efforts with someone else. Does anyone else see this as an issue?

All of which reminds me of a family story from 20 years ago. I was at a conference in the US and Sue and our two boys (then rather small) came with me. While I was sitting in meetings, they had a tour of the rather extensive Wycliffe facility where we were meeting. The lady doing the tour was delighted to have a couple of 'real Wycliffe kids from Africa' in her tour group and made a great fuss of Dave and Sam. The last step on the tour was a photograph of William Cameron Townsend, the founder of Wycliffe. "I'm sure that your mommy and daddy have told you all about Uncle Cam, children", enthused the tour guide. To which one of our two (name removed toÂ protect the guilty) said "nope, never 'eard of 'im!" Perhaps, foundation stories aren't always so strong.Â