DOVES OR SNAKES

Posted on January 7, 2008 by Eddie

Category: Christian Life

This morning the three of us who are conducting a review of some Bible translation work in Togo meditated on one verse of Scripture together: Matthew 10:16.

> *Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves.*

At the start of a week where we will taking a long hard look at people who are working very hard in difficult and demanding situations this was a good place to start. We had a number of thoughts about the passage - I wonder if anyone else could add others.

- Jesus has sent us: OK, these verses were originally written to the disciples, but it is important that we remember that we are working for the Lord, not just for ourselves or for an organisation.
- Sent out as sheep among wolves: sheep are generally not comfortable among wolves - at least not for long!Â In serving Christ, we should not expect to be comfortable or to find things easy. The cool harmattan breeze which is keeping temperatures down to the high twenties Celsius is nice - but we shouldn't be surprised if things, or people get a bit sticky.
- Be as wary as serpents: we need to have our wits about us, thinking clearly and speaking honestly.
- As harmless as doves: our job is to encourage and strengthen people. If we do have to criticise or suggest better ways of doing so, we must do so in a way that builds people up, not knocks them down. We'll need to be as wary as lots of serpents if we are to get this one right!

In some ways there is nothing here that you couldn't find in a good management or leadership text book, but the fact that our Lord is giving these instructions makes them all the more powerful. He wants us to do a good job!