# MISSION AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

*Posted on May 19, 2015 by Eddie*

The meaning of the word mission has shifted in the past few years and that has brought us a couple of significant problems.
**Category:** Mission

People like me spend ages banging on about how world mission has changed. The global nature of Christianity has changed and we need a radical paradigm shift in how we think about world mission and, especially, how we go about doing it. The problem is, at the same time, the meaning of the word "mission" has been undergoing a shift which has changed the game for all of us.

To put it crudely, "mission" used to be what happened overseas, while the church did "evangelism"Â at home. This dichotomy was never an accurate one and over the last few years, in the face of the increasing secularisation of the West, churches have started to talk more and more about "mission" as a home based activity.

In theory, I don't have a problem with this; we are called to bear witness to Jesus wherever we are be that High Wycombe orÂ the ends of the earth. However, in practice, I have two big concerns.

The first is that the concept of mission as witness to Christ is being watered down. I recently had a reason to look at the website for a church in the South East of England. Splashed all over the front page was publicity for their big mission project. "Woohoo", though I, "this will be good!" To say that I was disappointed to discover that all they were doing was building a new building is an understatement. A building is not a mission project, it's a building! Buildings may be used for mission - and in some churches they are, but buildings can also be places that Churches use to retreat from any real engagement with the outside world. When we've got to the point where we can describe putting up a building as "mission" we have robbed the word of any real meaning.

The second problem is that as we start to talk about "mission" as a home based activity, we are losing the international dimension. Yes, we need to do "mission" in the UK, I'm all for it, but if we lose sight of the rest of the world, we are not getting to grips with our full calling from Christ. If your church has a mission to its local area but no mission to the wider world, it's a bit like going to McDs and ordering a bun without the burger, salad and pickles. You are getting something right, but it is far from the full story.