BOMBING SYRIA AND OVERSEAS MISSION

Posted on November 30, 2015 by Eddie

Our approach to mission recruitment is often just as wrong as most of the British' press' coverage of the Syria debate. It's putting us and our local or personal concerns at the centre of a much bigger issue.
Category: Short-Term Mission

If you live in the UK, it can't have escaped your notice that the media are getting very worked up about the possibility of the UK bombing Daesh targets in Syria. However, what is interesting is where their focus lies. They aren't talking about protecting the British people (which is presumably the purpose of any campaign) and they aren't talking about the Syrian people (who would be the most impacted by it), Â they are talking about the internal politics of the Labour Party. A combination of managerial ineptitude within Labour ranks and the prurience of the press has turned an extremely serious issue into an episode in a political soap opera. It might be funny, if it weren't so deadly serious.

It isn't all about the Labour Party.

Making an inelegant leap to the normal subject matter of this blog; I believe that much publicity and recruiting material for overseas mission (especially short-term mission) falls into the same trap. We don't talk about God (in whose name we do mission), or the people we will serve (who are the ostensible recipients of what we do), we talk about ourselves. You know the sort of thing; "you can change the world", "find God's plan for your life", "do something extraordinary" or "have a life-changing experience".

That sort of approach to mission recruitment is just as wrong as most of the British' press' coverage of the Syria debate. It's putting us and our local or personal concerns at the centre of a much bigger issue.

Yes, you may make a huge difference, you might discover God's will for your life and you may well have a life changing experience, but that's not the point. We are called to take up our cross and follow Christ, to love our neighbours as ourselves. We aren't called to have life affirming experiences.

I fully understand the desire to write recruit-centred advertising materials. That's what brings the punters in. However, I can't help believing that as we do so, we give an unbalanced picture of what mission is all about and we fail to confront the weaknesses of an increasingly self-absorbed Church.

It isn't all about us.

Please note, that this isn't a post about the rights and wrongs of bombing Syria, it's a post about the way in which we have a tendency to place ourselves and our own interests at the centre of everything. If you want to comment about the politics of the bombing, please find a blog that is actually dealing with that issue.Â