MIND THE GAP

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â€œMission is the mother of theology,â€ as well as the mother of the New Testament texts.
Category: Mission

A missionary is someone who wears dubious shorts, a solar topee and who preaches to people under a palm tree; a rather simple but well intentioned soul. A theologian on the other hand, lives in an ivory tower and writes long books with lots of footnotes that only other theologians can understand.

OK, I'm exaggerating. Missionaries don't all wear dubious shorts and some theologians write books that other people can understand. My point, isn't so to describe missionaries and theologians, but to point out that (to a great extent) they are two different types of people.

However, it wasn't always thus:

> *â€œMission is the mother of theology,â€ as well as the mother of the New Testament texts. Neither the second- and third-century writers, nor the New Testament writers, were systematic theologians sitting in ivy-covered citadels contemplating the character and will of God. They were persecuted, hurried, and harried apostles (read â€œmissionariesâ€) challenging the religious, political, and social structures of their timeâ€"proclaiming a Kingdom that was above all kingdoms and authorities of this world. It was this mission that birthed biblical and theological reflection.*

FromÂ Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and GloryÂ by Scott Sundquist (of which more in future posts).

Yes, I know that there are theologians who are involved in mission and missionaries who do theology; it's just that we need more of both.Â