BOTH SIDES NOW

Posted on March 7, 2016 by Eddie

Sue and I are in different places doing very different things: seeing mission from both sides.
Category: Observations

It's going to be an interesting week for Sue and I.

Sue is still in Madagascar, working with local pastors and church leaders, helping them to translate Matthew's Gospel. She will patiently work through the text with them, helping them to get to grips with the meaning and then to express it clearly and accurately in their own language. It is hard work; intellectually stretching and involving a huge amount of flexibility as she switches between three (or is it four or five) languages.

Meanwhile, as this post is published, I should just be arriving inÂ Addis Ababa forÂ a meeting called Â the MANIÂ Consultation:

> *MANI is an African movement, a network of networks and African National Initiatives, focused on catalyzing African National Initiatives and mobilizing the resources of the Body of Christ in Africa for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.*
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> *MANIâ€™s stated purpose is to affirm, motivate, mobilize and network Christian leaders by inspiring them with the vision of reaching the unreached and least evangelized in Africa, and the wider world, through the communication of up to date research, reports and models; consultations and prayer efforts focusing on the unfinished task.*
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> *The MANI Vision is that: â€œâ€¦(Africa) be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the seaâ€ Habakuk 2:14.*

Unlike Sue, I won't have an active role, I'm simply there to observe (though I have offered my services as a French-English translator, if one is needed). I'll be sitting, listening and soaking things up. My job will be no where near as intellectually stretching as Sue's. Though, if I know mission conferences, it will be gruelling, with far too many meetings crammed into each day.

However, I think that there are ways in which my week is going to be more stretching than Sue's (I would say that). Sue is working with leaders from young churches, training them to translate the Scriptures into their own language. It is difficult work, but it is what we trained to do. It also fits the picture we often have of missionaries; helping people to learn new skills and serving the church. On the other hand, I'm going to Addis Ababa to learn from the African church; to hear what God is doing and to consider how this can help the church in this country to go about its mission. In many ways this is a reverse of the traditional role of the missionary. I'm there to learn, not to teach; to listen not to talk. I'm going to be out of my comfort zone, but I hope it's going to be a great week.

Hopefully, I'll get a good internet connection and I'll be able to blog my experiences.

Meanwhile, please pray for Sue and I as we work in our very different ways.