MISSION AND THE SPIRIT

Posted on May 11, 2016 by Eddie

You can't do mission without the Spirit and you can't claim to have the Spirit unless you are involved in mission.
Category: Mission

The opening of the book of Acts is a key point in the overall story of the Bible. Ever since Genesis chapter 12, the story has revolved around the descendants of Abraham, the people of Israel. God chose to bless Abraham's descendants, so that they, in turn could bless the wider world. Up till this point, their role in blessing the world has been rather passive; they were called to be a people who demonstratedÂ God's justice, love and mercy in their national life and to draw people to worship God.

Now, at the start of Acts, they are to move from being passive to active. Jesus disciples, are about to spring into action and take the message of God's love to the wider world. So just before his ascension, Jesus gives them their marching orders and tells them that they will be his witnesses locally, nationally and internationally. Then, he gives them one final instruction, they are to go home and wait.

At this critical point, where the Christian message is about to burst onto the world, Jesus says, go home and do nothing.

Well, not quite do nothing. He tells them to wait for the Holy Spirit to come on them.

The point is that Christian mission is entirely dependant on the work of the Spirit. It's not about our plans and strategies. It's not about having good support networks, appropriate contextualisation and creative ways of sharing Jesus. These things are all good; but ultimately, mission is a work of the Spirit and can only be done in his power.

Then we come to Acts chapter 2 and the Spirit descends on the disciples. What happens? They immediately dash out into the streets to tell people about the greatness of God. They can't help themselves.

Mission can't be done without the empowering of the Spirit, but equally if we are filled with the Spirit we won't be able to stop ourselves sharing about Christ. There are those who seem to imply that being filled with the Spirit means having wonderful worship times and fantastic experiences. That's great, but if the Spirit doesn't push us out into the world to witness to Christ, then there is something strange going on.

You can't do mission without the Spirit and you can't claim to have the Spirit unless you are involved in mission.