IT'S ALL ABOUT US

Posted on July 21, 2017 by Eddie

It is our job to be Jesus' witnesses, to tell people about him all over the world. It's not complicated. When the church itself, and not Jesus becomes the story, we have quite simply lost the plot.
Category: Church: UK

If you live in the UK, you are probably aware that there has been a bit of a kerfuffle about the amount of money that various people at the BBC are paid. To be honest, you could hardly avoid it. The story of who gets paid how much (and who doesn't) has been front and centre in much of the news media, especially the BBC, all week.

I have a bit of a problem about the amount of coverage that this story has received. I have no problem with the idea that salaries of public employees (which is effectively what BBC staff are) should be in the public domain and the disparity between male and female staff is certainly worthy of note. However, I don't think that the pay that a bunch of celebrities receive is all that important in the grand scheme of things. The news media have more important things to report on and to investigate.

However, I think that coverage of the BBC salaries reflects two things. Firstly, the public's insatiable appetite for stories about famous people and secondly the media's desire to make the news, not just to report it. I'd like to explore the second one for a wee while.

It is undoubtedly a good thing that the BBC is willing to investigate itself and report on bad practices within the organisation. However, the prominence that they gave this issue was out of all proportion to its importance in the real world outside of the media bubble. There are other news services which gave the story a massive push because it gave them an excuse to kick the BBC, which isn't very nice. However, when the Daily Mail spends ages criticising the BBC, it is actually just another example of the media reporting on the media when there are other, far more important things going on. Instead of reporting on the stories, the media have become the story.

This sort of thing is repeated on a regular basis. A journalist conducts a particularly aggressive interview with a politician and the interview becomes the story, rather than the policies that it was supposed to be exploring.

I believe that the news media are incredibly important in a functioning democracy; we need them to do their job and to do it well and at times this means reporting on themselves. However, the focus of the media should always be on finding the stories, on digging out the truth, not on creating or being the story.

So what?

In Acts 1:8 Jesus said this to his disciples:

> *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhereâ€"in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

It is our job to be Jesus' witnesses, to tell people about him all over the world. It's not complicated.

When the church itself, and not Jesus becomes the story, we have quite simply lost the plot.

(Has anyone seen the plot recently?)