WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE THE WOOD FOR THE MISSIONAL TREES

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Category: Mission

I've spent most of my adult life involved in Christian mission in one way or another. I've worked as a Bible translator in an isolated Africa village and I've occupied a load of different training and leadership roles in a variety of countries on two continents. I've read more books on mission than any sensible person would wish to read and I've lost count of the number of conferences that I've attended, organised or spoken at.

I am a fluent speaker of mission jargon; I know my contextualisation from my indigenisation, and I know the difference between unreached and unengaged. Not only that, but I can speak knowledgeably (or, at least, convincingly) about the issues involved for churches and agencies sending people to work in hazardous places around the world.

I know about mission. I'm not really an expert as there are people who know more about just about everything than me, but few of them cover the same breadth as I do.

But...

As in every aspect of life, it is easy to get so involved in the details of what we are doing, that we miss the whole point of it.

> *...and through him God reconciledÂ everything to himself.Â He made peace with everything in heaven and on earthÂ by means of Christâ€™s blood on the cross.*

Mission isn't really about contextualisation or indigenisation. It isn't primarily about unreached people groups or the Great Commission. It is about God's gracious intervention in history, about the Son taking on human form and suffering death on a cross, so that through him God could bring peace to a broken cosmos.

The incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus provide the reason for mission. We are called to bear witness to Jesus, to point people to him and what he has done. Not only that, but he provides the model for our mission; we are sent out by him as He was sent by the Father - and that's not a very comfortable call.

Mission revolves around Jesus around his cross and his resurrection.

If we lose sight of this, if we get so tied up in our techniques, our statistics or even in our own motivation to serve, then we have lost the plot. Our best motivations, strategies and theologies can do nothing to heal a broken world - only Jesus can do that. Our job is to point people to him - everything else (important though it may be) is incidental.