A MODEL MISSIONARY FOR TODAY

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Some final thoughts from Acts: why we need to take note of Apollos.
Category: Observations

If you had to choose a model missionary from the book of Acts, who would it be?

I suspect that most people would opt immediately for Paul. He is the focus of Acts and his missionary journeys are extraordinary and inspiring. However, I'd go for someone else, someone who hardly gets a mention, but who typifies what mission is really all about today. I'd go for Apollos. This passage from Acts 18 tells us just about everything we know about him from Acts (he crops up again in some of the Pauline epistles).

> *Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt. He had been taught the way of the Lord, and he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit and with accuracy. However, he knew only about Johnâ€™s baptism.When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately.*
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> *Apollos had been thinking about going to Achaia, and the brothers and sisters in Ephesus encouraged him to go. They wrote to the believers in Achaia, asking them to welcome him. When he arrived there, he proved to be of great benefit to those who, by Godâ€™s grace, had believed. He refuted the Jews with powerful arguments in public debate. Using the Scriptures, he explained to them that Jesus was the Messiah.*

I have heard sermons that use this passage to be negative about Apollos. "He didn't know about the baptism of Jesus", people say, "his doctrine was unsound". But just think about it, here was someone who had the humility to admit that he didn't know everything and who was humble enough to learn from others. Where exactly is the problem? I'd far rather have to deal with people like Apollos than with those who believe that they know everything. However, that's not my point.

The thing that impresses me about Apollos is that he was an African missionary (from Alexandria in Egypt) who was heading to Greece, and who went to Bible school in Turkey. You don't get much more international than that. Paul gets all the headlines, but Apollos typifies the new multilingual, multicultural nature of the church at the end of Acts.

Today, the world mission movement is largely being carried out by people like Apollos (Apolloi?). People that we've not heard of, who hardly get a mention in mission magazines or on websites, but who are crossing borders and sharing the good news of Jesus as they go. It's true that, like Apollos, they may not have their theology all sorted out, but they are learning as they go. The mission movement as we know it (the Paul's, if you like) is important but it is the informal, truly international movement in Apollos' image that is really shaking things up.