

Model of Mission - Mission 5 (4/5/08)

Paul is in Ephesus. How does he show people how to change? Does he turn up for a three day campaign? A week??

He goes to live for years in the place, he works in the community, he is based among the people, and he puts forward the Gospel. He reasons with people in his community.

The big question is how can values such as justice and unity be affirmed apart from challenging some beliefs about the nature of things? It can't!

How can we change the world??

Paul uses persuasion. First in the synagogue and when they didn't listen he hired a lecture hall to speak in, and he went there daily to argue.

Sadly, it is possible to be more enamoured by our arguments for the existence of God than God himself!!

We need to put our argument forward. We need to have a song in our voice when we sing, not the dry cracked note of dispute, but the song of joyful witness and tender invitation.

Biggest way which we change, and therefore change the world, is by changing the world view of where our priorities lie.

Following Jesus is not locked into a time frame, or by using the proper language or coming to the right building. It is a new way of living that challenges the ways of life taken for granted in the world.

See the way of the world in Ephesus is all centred on Artemis. She was a goddess with many different ways of being worshipped.

So people begin following what Paul was saying and moved away from the temple. Led to a loss of revenue for those who provided for the temple, and they began to protest.

There is mob violence. The city is in uproar. (Picture of auditorium)

Those who oppose the Way do so because their own vested interests, usually economic and political are threatened.

Not surprisingly, whenever conversion to Christ has threatened the vested economic, status or political interests of society, Christianity has been opposed.

In his letter to the Church, Paul talks of one new humanity. Our model of mission searches for this new humanity, and when we see glimpses of it, we truly rejoice.

Desmond Tutu said 'As I have knelt in the Dean's stall watching a multiracial crowd file up to the altar rails, the one bread and one cup given by a mixed team of clergy and lay ministers with a multiracial choir. All this in an apartheid-mad South Africa - then tears of joy sometimes streamed down my face, that it could be indeed that Jesus Christ had broken down the wall of partition.'

What walls are you breaking down today? Where are you bringing in the new humanity?