



ROB'S BLOG

## August 2013 – Mission

In my opinion, the top priority for the church today. Why?

Because God is Love, and love is always outgoing. Love does not and cannot exist alone, it needs to go out - God creates as an expression of his love, he calls, cares, and guides Israel in the Old Testament as an act of love. Jesus is an act of Love, and so is the sending/coming of the Holy Spirit an expression of the nature of Love, which is God. The trinity itself, as a mysterious effort at understanding God, is about relationships between outgoing expressions of Love, and therefore, Mission.

To go out is to become vulnerable, take a risk, and invite the possibility of being affected, changed blessed, and hurt.

Mission must be our top priority because it is about the God in whom we believe. But we don't have all the answers, all we have is Love, an understanding of the nature of God, and the examples of creation, Jesus, the Spirit, and the Biblical histories of Israel and the Church.

So, our mission, as an expression of God's mission is about crossing 'our' boundaries and going out, blurring those edges in order to make them two way access points. Mission involves risk, it can include partnership, and it must involve the possibility of being affected or even changed.

Two examples:

- The baptisms of Benjamin and Emily in the river Wharfe were a profound moment - we went outside the comfort of our familiar worship environment and had to be aware of what people thought of us singing Jesus songs in public, and using 'religious' language in a very public place - what sort of witness did we give? Did we influence anyone towards faith? Were we changed, do we come back different because of where we went and what we did?
- Liz Day is making some wonderful partnerships with community groups for the older people in Ilkley, she is becoming aware of the possibility of us going out more, partnering with them and together achieving more than either of us can achieve alone. But if we're serious about her work, our work, we have to be ready to think differently, be affected by the encounters with others she has and we have.

Mission is so much more than 'bringing people in'. To love is to be like God, that can be painful and joyful, and hard work, and very rewarding - as any lover knows.

God bless,

Rob

