

Thank you very much to all of you who took the time and trouble to respond to the three questions we sent out via e-mail. Those responses are important to us and give us a deep insight into your understanding of what it means to share in God's mission to the world. Everyone should have received a digest of the responses and been offered a copy of the full responses. This was the starting point for our work together in this consultation. We have heard from the church in Britain about..... Now we turn to what you have been saying to us.

The depth and range of the biblical themes that are shaping your approach to mission in the 21st century is stunning. You quote passages from Exodus to Revelation. Several key themes emerged from the passages: incarnational missiology, from everywhere to everywhere, justice issues, partnership and reconciliation. Later in this session we will reflect together on this wealth of biblical material and listen for what God is saying to us about mission as we explore the scriptures together.

The second question asked:

“How is the Good News impacting on finance, politics and development where you are?”

Several interesting themes emerged from your responses:

- In some parts of the world you reported on a tendency towards the privatisation of religious belief. You tell of a tendency to confine the impact of the Good News to individual religious experience and personal salvation. There is a growing interest in new religious movements which emphasise the individual and have no interest in making an impact on society. Christians are being encouraged to retreat from the “wicked world” into a holy enclave. This narrow view of personal faith makes little impact on finance, politics and development and needs to be challenged.
- You describe visions of hope grounded in the Good News, where it is the marginalised in our societies who are the voices of hope. They dream of a new heaven and a new earth where gospel values of justice and equality shape human communities, but this is no idle dream, it is a vision they hold which gives them hope and empowers them to bring about the transformation of political and financial structures. Mission is about empowering the marginalised to be agents in their own development.
- You speak about the challenge of the Good News to behave in a Christ like way in public life and not be corrupted by the abuse of power and wealth. You highlight place in the world where Christians are taking a stand for what is true and honest and it is being noticed.