MISSION AGENCY FINANCES 2019

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A quick look at trends in mission agency income over five years.
Category: Observations

Over the past couple of years, I have been gathering data on British mission agencies and using it to illustrate trends in the way that mission is progressing. In this post, I'd like to draw together a bit more financial data. I have consulted the annual financial reports that each charity is required to file with the Charity Commission and now have four years of data to work with. You can find the definitions that I use in this report which you can download for free.

There are 144 mission agencies in my sample, but the information only refers to those agencies which have filed a financial report for each of the last four years so that the comparison from year to year is a fair one. Some agencies have folded and no longer report on their finances, while some newer ones did not report at the start of the sample. Other agencies, for reasons that I'm not privy to have missed a year for some reason or other. All of these agencies are excluded from the following analysis which covers 109 agencies. Because this analysis only concerns the agencies for which I have four years' worth of figures, some of the headline totals differ from other reports that I have published.

Total Income for the 109 Agencies

- 2015: Â£322M
- 2016: Â£338M
- 2017: Â£344M
- 2018: Â£367M

This shows a steady growth in income for the agencies over a four year period. Seven agencies in the sample (6.4%) each received an income of over Â£10M in each of the four years under consideration. The combined income for these agencies and the percentage of the total agency income is as follows.

Income for the 7 Largest Agencies

- 2015: Â£211M (66%)
- 2016: Â£227M (67%)
- 2017: Â£228M (66%)
- 2018: Â£243M (66%)

In other words, these seven agencies received around two-thirds of the income given to mission agencies during the sample period. The seven agencies are; Elim Missions (I'm not entirely convinced that this one should be included in my sample), MAF International, MAF UK, OM, Samaritan's Purse, Tear Fund and Leprosy Mission International. It should be noted that these agencies are, for the most part, focused on social action in one form or another.

In terms of the activities that money is given to, 50% of the money was given to agencies involved in some form of proclamation, 22% to agencies involved in evangelism and 10% to agencies working

with unreached people groups. These figures did not vary appreciably across the four year sample period. It is important to note that all of the agencies involved in proclamation etc. are also involved in some social action in various ways, so the actual income challenged into proclamation and evangelism work with UPGs is less than these percentages show.

Sixty of the agencies saw their income increase from 2015-2018, with fifty-one seeing a decline. For a number of agencies, the decrease was significant, with four agencies reporting less than half the income in 2018 than they received in 2015.

In a future post, I will explore whether it is possible to correlate the change in an agency's income with anything else.