WHAT I WANT FROM BOARD REPORTS

Posted on February 14, 2020 by Eddie

Mission agencies have to submit annual reports which meet certain government standards. I have my own suggestions of what I would like them to contain.
Category: Observations

As I've mentioned previously, I have spent a lot of time recently looking at annual reports from mission agencies.

Every charity has to submit an annual report, including a statement of accounts to the Charity Commission. These reports all have to contain certain basic sections, but within this framework, there is a good deal of variation. Some agencies include a lot of background information, stories about the agency's work, photos, pie charts, the works. Others stick to the bare minimum and produce a plain, straightforward account completely free of bells and whistles.

Because the basics of the report are defined by law, it is always relatively easy to dig out information such as the total income and expenditure for a given year. However, beyond this, things can get a little tricky. Some agencies say how many missionaries they support, and others don't. Some tell you how many missionaries they support one year, but not the next. And hardly any of them define what they mean by the word missionary, so comparing one agency to another can be rather difficult. Equally, while all agencies have to give a detailed balance sheet, they all use slightly different conventions, so it is hard to compare what different agencies spend on the same thing.

To be honest, I'm not worried whether the report is simple or very colourful and graphic-heavy. The main thing I want to be able to do is to find the key information. I also appreciate it if the PDF format is not hard on the eyes (using light grey ink on a chart of accounts is the act of a sadist!) and easy to cut and paste from.

As a punter; I want to be able to see the following:

- Total Income
- Total Expenditure
- The CEO's remuneration
- How much the agency spends on administration and publicity in the home country

As a researcher; I want all of the above, plus

- A concise explanation of where the agency works and what it does (I assume the punters know this already)
- The number of missionaries (short and long-term) serving with the agency as well as the number of recruits and the rate of attrition over the year. This should include a definition of

what is meant by a missionary.
- A discussion of the agency's concept of mission and the role of expats within that.

Now, having helped prepare these reports for an agency, I know that people basically work through a template and don't have the time to respond to the wishes of an interested researcher like myself, so I'm not expecting changes. But a guy can always wish...