MISSION AGENCIES KOUYANET ARCHIVES 4

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Category: Observations

Mission Agencies is one area in which I may justifiably claim to have a certain amount of expertise. I have worked with a mission agency for almost four decades, including spending time as both a board member and the CEO, I have consulted with the boards of numerous other agencies and I have written a PhD thesis on the theology and practices of British mission agencies. I am also in the process of a multi-year study of the finances of British agencies.

The articles in this document emerge out of my lived experience, my conversations with missionaries and leaders and from my academic studies. This does not, of course, mean that everything I say is correct, but it does ensure that they are not just random uninformed opinions. That being said, I am aware that much of what is in here will make uncomfortable reading for mission agency staff and boards; at least I hope so.

My underlying conviction is that Christ will continue to build his church around the world, however, this does not mean that British mission agencies will continue to play the same part in this process as they have done in the past. Indeed, I would argue, that if our current structures are going to continue to be relevant to what God is doing globally, then we need a drastic rethink of what we are doing, that goes beyond mere managerial or strategic changes.

A further conviction is that the degree of change required by our movement is such that it must be driven by the boards of trustees, not the day to day executive management. I have included a number of longer documents as appendices; these include a section from my PhD which was written for agency boards and which develops some of the themes mentioned in this forward. I would encourage anyone who wants to dig into these issues more deeply to consider my book Mission Agencies in Crisis? (Regnum) which was developed from my thesis, alternatively by coming up with the right search terms you can download the thesis itself for free. I have also produced a small booklet aimed at helping boards think through the sorts of issues raised here, it is called The Way Forward and is available as a download from Kouya.net or as a Kindle book.

If, at times, I appear critical of mission agencies, I do so because I believe that we in the British mission movement need to reflect deeply on our structures and actions if we are to continue to be relevant to what God is doing and to the ways in which international mission structures are evolving.

You can download the document as a pdf for a small fee here, or as an Amazon Kindle document.