CHURCH MISSION NOTICEBOARD CHECKLIST

Posted on April 11, 2014 by Eddie

If a church's mission activity doesn't involve reaching outside of the UK, taking the Gospel to places in the world where it has not reached and promoting the distribution and use of the Bible, then something has gone awry.
Category: Churches and Global Mission

One of the nice things about my job is that I get to visit lots of different churches. Generally, I aim to turn up well in advance of the meeting or service that I am attending and this gives me an opportunity to have a look around the church. If I were an architect, I'd no doubt use my time to study the building itself and if I were a health and safety person, I'd look for the prominently displayed certificate, but I'm a missionary and the first thing I gravitate to is the church mission noticeboard.

Most churches have some sort of noticeboard which they use to promote interest in the mission activities they support. The way these noticeboards are laid out follows a general pattern, there is usually a world map showing where people work, photographs of the workers and copies of prayer letters to inspire people to take an interest. Sometimes the boards are artistic, other times they are purely functional and sometimes they are desperately out of date (especially the photographs!).

However, I'd like to make three suggestions of things that I think should be obligatory on every Church mission notice board.

1. Evidence of some interest in overseas/cross-cultural mission. It isn't enough to have church members working in other parts of the UK doing good things with other churches, youth, the poor or whatever. These things are all good, but we have a call to go to the whole world, not just to our own country.
2. Interest in promoting the Bible. If we take the Bible seriously as a revealed text from God, we will want to promote it's translation, distribution and use. There are hundreds of millions of people who don't have a single word of Scripture available to them in their mother tongue. Yes, I would like people to support Wycliffe, but the most important thing is that we support the spread of God's Word.
3. An indication that the church is doing something to take the message of Christ to people who have not yet heard about him. I talk a lot here about the spread of the Church around the world, but there are still billions of people who have no opportunity to hear about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Meanwhile 85% of Christian workers worldwide are working to sustain the Church, rather than to reach outside of its boundaries. This is something which should motivate every church in the country!

There are all sorts of things which fall under the rubric of mission; care for the poor, providing water, fighting injustice and so on; these are all good and necessary. However, if a church is not involved in spreading the Gospel beyond these shores, especially in places where people have not heard about Jesus and is not doing something to promote the spread and use of the Bible, it is not fulfilling its calling as a community of Christians.

By the way, this doesn't necessarily mean sending or supporting missionaries; there are many ways in which a church can get involved in work across the globe.

Have a look at your church noticeboard this weekend and see how it lines up against my suggestions. You might want to have a word with someone, if it doesn't.

I am aware that some churches are too small to get meaningfully involved in a range of mission activities, but even then I suggest that they should prioritise one of the three areas I've mentioned above, rather than some of the other, more fashionable, causes.Â