HARD WORK, HARD PLACES, HARD CASH

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Category: Mission

Yesterday, I wrote about the lie that is propagated around the Olympics that anyone who works hard enough can achieve their dream. A number of people made helpful comments on the post for which I'm grateful. However, I'd like to draw attention to one particular response on Twitter:

https://twitter.com/ChrisHowles/status/766525602631299072

The point in Chris' second tweet is really important; there are places whereÂ mission work is exceptionally difficult and where people can work incredibly hard for years but only see very limited success (though this begs the question of how we define success).

There is a further comparison with this year's success at the Olympics which I'd like to briefly highlight. One of the reasons that the British team is doing so well is that finance is focussed on sports that are likely to be successful. In fact those teams which don't do as well as expected are likely to have their funding withdrawn.

The concerning thing is that there are people who view funding mission in the same light. Finance and missionary effort is applied in places where there is likely to be more response. I've heard it put as crudely as funders saying that it costs less to save a soul in one country than in another (and I thought Jesus paid the price?).

While this sort of thinking works well for the Olympics and may, at first glance, seem to make sense in mission work, it is not a good basis for Christian ministry. Let me explain...

If we concentrate our funds and our mission effort on places where people become Christians relatively quickly, we will be concentrating on places where, by definition, there are lots of Christians.Â Meanwhile, the real challenge for mission work is exactly those places where it is difficult to preach the gospel and where people are resistant to faith in Jesus.

If we are to see the Gospel go out to all corners of the globe, we will need to invest money in reaching the difficult places. More significantly, people will need to invest their lives, and quite possibly lose their lives, reaching out to people who (at the moment) are hostile to the Christian faith.

To stave off the inevitable comments; I know that money needs to be well spent, properly accounted for and used according to the donor's wishes. I also realise that lack of success doesn't necessarily mean that people are working in hard places - it could mean that they aren't doing a very good job. However, these points don't negate the central point of my post.

We have to put our missionary effort (lives, time and money) into the places where Jesus' name is not known, not just into places where it is easy to have success.