A FACT AND A HYPOTHESIS

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I believe that the British church now concentrates on sending missionaries to places which have been reached by the Gospel, rather than to places where there are very few Christians.
Category: Observations

First let's deal with the fact; over the last fifty years the church has grown at an amazing rate around the world. Places in Africa and Asia which were once considered unevangelised mission fields now have significant Christian populations. Not only that, but there are new mission movements developing in these places. It is important to remember that despite this massive growth of the church, there are still many places where there are almost no Christians.

So now on to the hypothesis. It is my suspicion that despite the growth of the Church in many parts of the world, the geographical spread of missionaries sent out from the UK has not changed in the last fifty years.

If you put the fact and the hypothesis together you end up with the situation (which I believe we are in) that the British church now concentrates on sending missionaries to places which have been reached by the Gospel, rather than to places where there are very few Christians. This is not a deliberate or planned situation, it has simply crept up on us while the world church has changed, but we have continued to do more or less the same thing.

I need to make a couple of observations at this point. Firstly, I believe that it is perfectly legitimate to send missionaries to support churches in other parts of the world; I just don't believe that this should be the main focus of our mission work (which I contend it is). Secondly, I know that there are some agencies which do concentrate on sending people to places where there are very few Christians - I just don't believe that there are enough agencies like this, or that they get the profile they need.

Of course, the big problem with this post is that my hypothesis is unproven. In the absence of any hard evidence either for or against it, I'm pretty sure that it is correct, but it would be good to have proof. So, I'd like to finish this short post with a plea for some help. Does anyone know of a source for information on the geographical distribution of British missionaries over the last one hundred years?

Somewhere along the line, this short blog post turned into a slightly longer article on Christian Today.