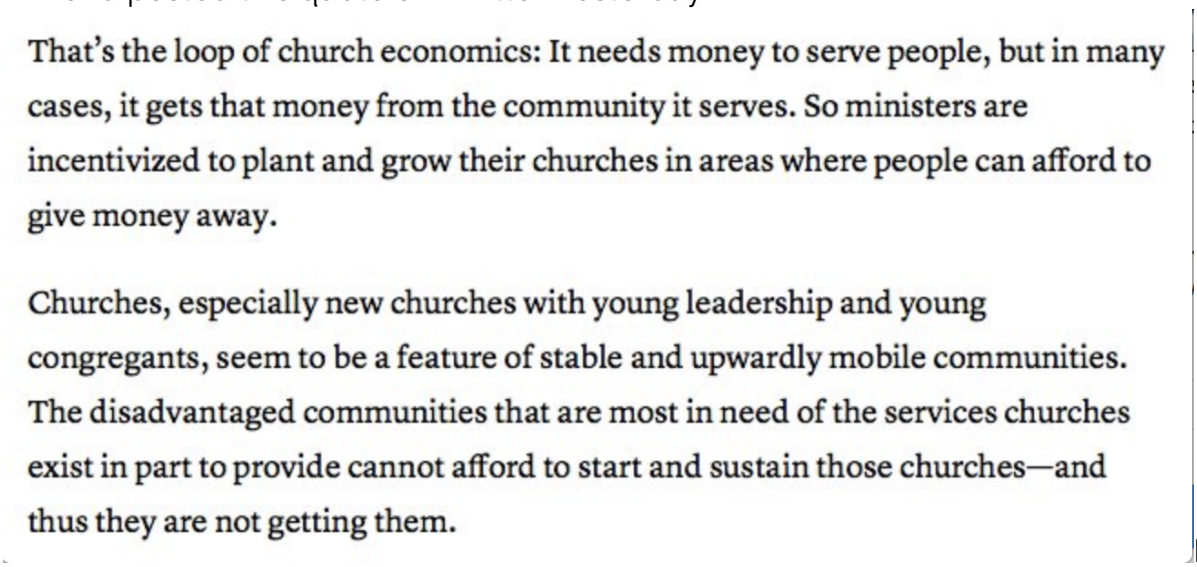
MONEY, MINISTRY AND MISSION

Posted on January 8, 2018 by Eddie

Mission agencies need to be prepared to question their wholeÂ raison d'Ãªtre in the light of the growing world church - questions they are unlikely to ask as long as much of the focus lies on money and pragmatic issues
Category: Observations

A friend posted this quote on Twitter Yesterday.Â



That's the loop of church economics: It needs money to serve people, but in many cases, it gets that money from the community it serves. So ministers are incentivized to plant and grow their churches in areas where people can afford to give money away.

Churches, especially new churches with young leadership and young congregants, seem to be a feature of stable and upwardly mobile communities. The disadvantaged communities that are most in need of the services churches exist in part to provide cannot afford to start and sustain those churches—and thus they are not getting them.

It reminded me of an article by Rollin Grams that I referred to five years ago on Kouyanet:

> *The mission agency is struggling in its home office to fund the operation, and its leaders are glad to get new recruits who will have to pay 13% operational funds.Â There may be other benefits to the agency or its key members as new recruits contribute some of their support to the overall work of the mission.Â The mission agency needs to keep accepting missionaries to fund its operations and replace missionaries who have left the mission. (Read the whole thing here.)*

Both of these quotes illustrate a quandary that we face in ministry. You need money if you are going to do things. However, there are some things that you can do that will bring more money in than other things would. So, obviously, you do the things that bring the money in.

This all makes perfect sense in our pragmatic finance driven world, where financial security is one of the chief concerns of charity governance. However, it is antithetical to the upside down kingdom of God.

The search for financial security means that we ask questions such as "how do we raise more funds?" and Â "how do we make savings?". These aren't bad questions, but they should not be the ones that drive the shape of our mission.

We need to be prepared to step out in ways that make no financial sense whatsoever in order to follow where God is leading us. We have to be prepared to deal with the possibility of having a smaller, but more focussed ministry that touches a real point of need, rather than something bigger, glossier and altogether more impressive. Mission agencies need to be prepared to question their wholeÂ *raison d'Ãªtre* in the light of the growing world church - questions they are unlikely to ask as

long as much of the focus lies on money and pragmatic issues. To quote Grams again:

> *The mission agency needs to understand how it relates to the mission of God as it is laid out in Scripture and then ask itself how it is accomplishing this mission.Â If it did, it would probably be a leaner, highly qualified, and focussed mission.*