THESIS ABSTRACT

Posted on May 11, 2019 by Eddie

What I've spent the last four years working on.
Category: Observations

For those who are interested, this is the abstract to my PhD thesis. The whole thing will eventually appear in book form.

> *Evangelical mission agencies are organisations which exist in order to promote the dissemination of Christianity around the world. They do this through overt proclamation of the Christian message and by serving the populations they encounter through a range of activities including medical work, education and advocacy.*
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> *This study examines the way in which the theological position of six British evangelical mission agencies has an impact on their practices.*
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> *Four significant issues in mission theology are identified from the literature and the agencies are classified into different groups according to their alignment with these issues. By examining the literature produced by the six agencies, the practices of the organisations in the different groups were compared and contrasted.*
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> *There is no obvious correlation in the practices of the agencies who were assigned to the same group on the basis of their theological position, nor are there any clear differences between those assigned to different groups. The conclusion is that the agenciesâ€™ positions with regard to these particular theological issues have a limited impact on their practices.*
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> *The study considers the reasons for this disconnect between theological values and actions.*
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> *Because of their structures and innate pragmatism, the agencies are ill- equipped to reflect on their principles and practices from a theological standpoint. Today the church is growing worldwide, while experiencing a recession in Western Europe. These changes mean that the rationale for British mission agencies is in question and also that a new paradigm for mission is developing. The ability of British agencies to react to these changes will, to a large extent, depend on their capacity to reflect theologically on their situation. An appendix to this study provides suggestions for steps that agencies can take to face these issues.*