MISSION AGENCY AGENCY FUTURES: GETTING PEOPLE INVOLVED

Posted on June 4, 2019 by Eddie

God is at work around the world, building his church and calling people from everywhere to be involved in the work of cross-cultural mission. If your agency can see no further than mobilising Brits for mission work, then, frankly, you are out of step with what God is doing. You might want to consider shutting up shop.Â
Category: Observations

In the first post in this series I wrote the following:

> *In broad terms, agencies aim to get people to give, pray or go. They need people to fund their work through (ideally, regular) financial giving, they rely heavily on people praying for their work and they seek to recruit more missionaries to carry out the work.*

What I didn't say, though it was implied is that (for the most part) these efforts are aimed at people in the UK (or the home country of the agency). Agencies seek to raise funds from Brits, to get Brits to pray for the work worldwide and to recruit Brits to work as missionaries. However, in an age in which the UK church is in decline as compared to much of the rest of the world, this is a short-sighted strategy at best and, more importantly, it is out of step with what God is doing around the world. Agencies could (and, indeed, should) be seeking to involve people from all around the world in their work; especially those from the countries in which they work. This means getting people involved in all three aspects that I have mentioned; giving, praying and going. Let me swiftly say that this doesn't necessarily mean that people will join the British mission agency; there is a wide range of other possibilities. The important thing is encouraging people into mission - not which structure they should belong to. I'll talk more about the logistics of this tomorrow, but in this post, I want to concentrate on attitudes.

The first thing to say is that some agencies do this really well, while others hardly do it.

Money: Agencies should be encouraging Christians worldwide to contribute financially to the work of God's mission. Yes, people in some places are much poorer than their Western counterparts and can't give as much - but they can still give. The automatic assumption by some in the West that poor Christians have nothing to contribute to God's work not only robs those people of dignity, but it also restricts the ability of local people to take ownership of mission activities.

Prayer: Encouraging people to pray for mission work should be a no-brainer. As a generalisation, the people in the growing churches around the world tend to pray more and with greater dependence on God than those in the West (cause and effect?). Dedicated smartphone apps, WhatsApp groups and such like can all be used to getting people praying - and you don't even need to go to the expense of printing. prayer letter!

Going: Agencies should seek to encourage people from around the world to go as missionaries. There are logistical issues involved - more of that tomorrow - but the principle stands. However, often the biggest issues are not ones of linguistics, but of attitudes. I have heard people say things such as "Africans can't be missionaries like us" or "these people don't have what it takes to be Bible translators" far too often. These sorts of attitudes may not be common (though I believe that they are commoner than one might expect) but they are out there. I might offend some people by saying this, but there is only one way to describe this sort of thinking - racism. I'd like to expand this point, but I

don't want to detract from the central point of this post.

God is at work around the world, building his church and calling people from everywhere to be involved in the work of cross-cultural mission. If your agency can see no further than mobilising Brits for mission work, then, frankly, you are out of step with what God is doing. You might want to consider shutting up shop.

The Whole Series

1. Mission Agency Futures: The Present
2. Mission Agency Futures: The Problem
3. Mission Agency Futures: The Process
4. Mission Agency Futures: Mission Stuff
5. Mission Agency Futures: Getting People Involved
6. Mission Agency Futures: Logistics