MID 2019 MISSION AGENCY STATISTICS

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Category: Observations

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There will be more results to come over the next few months, but I thought I'd share a little of what I have discovered. I now have income figures going back to 2015 for 80 different agencies, which allows me to note some interesting trends.

The first thing to notice is that inflation over the period 2015 to 2018 was 8%. That means that agencies needed to see an increase in their income of 8% if they were effectively to stay still. 47 of the 80 agencies saw their income increase at less than that rate, which means that the majority of agencies in the sample have seen an effective drop in their income measured against inflation. Not only that, but 41 of the agencies saw an actual decrease in their income, that is they received less money in 2018 than they did in 2015.

These figures have to be taken with a degree of caution. Some individual agencies see fairly dramatic swings in their year on year income and the difference between 2015 and 2018 might just be a blip. However, as a trend across the board, this is obviously concerning.

Overall, the income for these 80 agencies increased from Â£171M to Â£186M an inflation-equalling increase of around 8%.

However, most of this increase can be attributed to two agencies, one of whom had a relatively poor year in 2015 and the other which received Â£4M more in 2018 than in any previous year (they had never received more than a million pounds before this). If these two agencies are excluded, the remaining agencies actually show a slight decrease in their income.

In terms of specific areas of ministry, the following trends can be noted.

- Agencies involved in proclamation saw a slight decrease in their income (Â£55.2M to Â£54.8M)
- Agencies involved in evangelism saw a bigger decrease in their income (Â£34.9M to Â£33.3M)
- Agencies working with UPGs saw a slight decrease (Â£18.2M to Â£18.2M)
- Agencies involved in social action saw an increase in their income (Â£134M to Â£149) (This includes both agencies mentioned above)

(For definitions of the terms used, see the document linked to in this post. It is important to note that working with UPGs is a subset of Evangelism, which is, in turn, a subset of proclamation, so these figures cannot simply be added up to obtain the total).

With regard to agencies which send missionaries, the following can be noted:

- Agencies which send long-term missionaries saw a slight decrease in their income (Â£38.0M to Â£36.9M)

- Agencies which send short-term missionaries saw a similar decrease (Â£39.3M to Â£37.8M)

These two sets of figures accord with the findings in my earlier report that those agencies which are involved in proclamation and evangelism are the most likely to send missionaries.

At this point, it is important to issue a *caveat*. These figures indicate income received by the agencies. They do not take into account missionaries who are sent overseas without the intermediary of an agency, nor do they account for missionaries working with an agency but who are in receipt of funding through an alternative source. Without additional sources of data, it would be difficult to draw conclusions about the numbers of missionaries sent from the UK.

However, what these interim figures do show is that, with a few exceptions, there is a broad pattern of British missionary agencies seeing their income struggle to meet inflation. There also seems to be a shift in funds towards social-action focussed agencies and away from those involved in evangelism.

Over the next few months, I will continue to gather this year's income reports from the agencies which have not submitted them. I'll also look at a few case studies to see what, if anything, can be learned from the fluctuations in income reported by individual agencies over the last few years.