HOW CHRISTIAN ARE WE?

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Category: Christian Life

This is something I wrote for an internal Wycliffe Bible Translators' publication, but it might be interesting to a wider audience, too.

Iâ€™ve been pondering on this question for the last few days and decided to share my thoughts with you.

Donâ€™t worry, Iâ€™m not about to check up on how often you have a quiet time or to ask your views on the nature of the atonement. Nor am I questioning the end point of our work. The things we are working towards, translated Scriptures, maturing disciples and language based development are all very Christian (if youâ€™ve never thought of language work as Christian, you can read my thoughts here).

My question refers to how we actually go about doing the work that God has called us to. For example letâ€™s take the issue of contact with our supporters, whether they are personal supporters or big organisational donors. When we write to ask for support, are we scrupulously honest about what it is we are doing and what we are achieving, or do we fall into the temptation of making things sound better than they are because thatâ€™s the best way to keep the support flowing? Another area which comes to mind is the whole question of how we decide what we should do. Are we driven by pragmatism â€“ we do what works â€“ or is there a different principle at work? Take the example of Church engagement. Do we involve ourselves with churches (in the UK and worldwide) because that is the best way to get our job done? If Church engagement means that things slow down or become more difficult, would we consider side-lining the Church in order to accomplish the task? Or are we motivated by a Biblical and theological reflection on the place of the Church in Godâ€™s mission?

I realise that this is not just a black and white issue. We have an appropriate focus on achieving our goals, especially when we are receiving funding to do so. However, it is the way in which we do things â€“ our integrity and our decision making processes â€“ which set us apart as Christian, not the things we achieve.

I was inspired to think around this question by an excellent presentation that Chris Wright gave at the Lausanne Congress last year. If you have decent bandwidth you can watch the video here.