# CHURCHES AND MISSION AGENCIES

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**Categories:** Church: World, Observations

The 20 Schemes blog raised an interesting issue this week:

> *We have seen a sad development in modern evangelicalism.Â  Churches believe that they exist to make disciples of their own local community.Â  Churches send money to a missionary society in order for that society to make disciples of other nations. Â We have cut off the local church from its commission to make disciples of all nations.*
>
> *It is the local church that is commanded by Christ to go and make disciples of all nations.Â  It is the local church that we see on the pages of the New Testament sending, supporting, and equipping church planting missionaries to go where the gospel is not yet known.Â  The missionary movement has never been divorced from the local church â€“ it is the church.*

However, it would be wrong to read the article as being opposed to missionary agencies, it isn't. A later paragraph reads:

> *If we trust in the sufficiency of the Gospel and if we affirm our call to go to the nations then we must accept that every church has great missionary potential.Â  So missionary agencies, on the whole, are not the problem.Â  We need experts to provide support, training, guidance and a credible infrastructure within which gospel workers can work.Â  The problem is when the church seeâ€™s the agency as the â€œsenderâ€  of the missionary and therefore becomes detached from the responsibility the church has to make disciples of all nations.*

This question of the relationship between churches and missionary agencies is a key one. I would suggest that mission agencies, Wycliffe included, have tended to have a low view of the Church's role in mission. However, I would also suggest that this is changing rapidly.

When I mentioned this issue on Twitter, it turned out (unsurprisingly) that Simon Cozens had already written a post on this question.

> *The relationship between the church and mission agency is basically one of attitude. The attitude really ought to be that the mission agency is helping the church get its members involved in world mission. For some reason, itâ€™s become, in many cases, the church seeing the mission agencies as poaching their would-be missionaries and redirecting their loyalty away from the church. Agencies, now viewed with suspicion, find themselves having to go into churches with a more apologeticÂ attitude.*

What do you think?