CHURCH PARTNERSHIP GUIDELINES

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If you are in church leadership in the UK, or if you have responsibility for a church's mission work, you MUST get hold of this code. It is an invaluable guide to helping you walk through the complexities of cross cultural partnerships. There is nothing earth-shattering here, most of it is just common sense. But the problem with common sense, is that it isn't very common.
Categories: Church: UK, Church: World

Working with Wycliffe Bible Translators is exhilarating; there are experts in linguistics, translation,Â typescript design and scholars of languages that you have never even heard of. Many mission agencies are like this; they are the domain of specialists, people who invest years working in one area.

My current assignment to Global Connections is rather different. We are only a small staff and none of us are particularly expert in anything. However, what Global Connections does, is rather remarkable. It draws together all of the organisations with expertise; mission agencies, churches and others, and helps them to work together and to benefit from the different strengths that each one brings to the table.

An excellent example of this is the new Code of Practice for Church to Church Partnerships, which has just gone live. This document started life a year ago at a conference where over a hundred church and mission leaders discussed the best way for Churches in the UK to partner with churches and others overseas. I consolidated the notes from the discussions, which were then refined by a group of church leaders from a variety of denominations into something close to a finished document. This was then reviewed by christian leaders in a number of other countries before being finalised. I don't know how many people have had input into this code of practice, but it is far better than any one agency or organisation could have produced on their own.

Here is one section from the code:

> ### *Relationships*
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> - *Good, loving, Christ-like relationships are more important than simply getting a task done. We need to invest time in getting to know one another and building the friendships that our common task is based upon.*
> - *People deal with conflict in relationships in different ways. It is important for partners to think through, together, how they will approach possible conflict or relationship breakdown. It is almost impossible to do this once a crisis has developed.*
> - *Very often, church to church partnerships are based upon a friendship between two leaders. This is a good basis for a start, but if the partnership is to last for a long time we need to ensure that a wider network of friendships develops.*
> - *Joint projects eventually come to an end and it is important to know how to bring activities to a close successfully. Friendships, however, should last beyond the shared project activity.*
> - *Often, the best way to protect a relationship is for the partners to sit down together and to develop a written document that sets out the way in which they see the partnership*

> *developing and any agreed outcomes. This should be revisited from time to time.*

It's been a privilege to be involved in drawing up this document, even if all I did was take notes and ask questions.