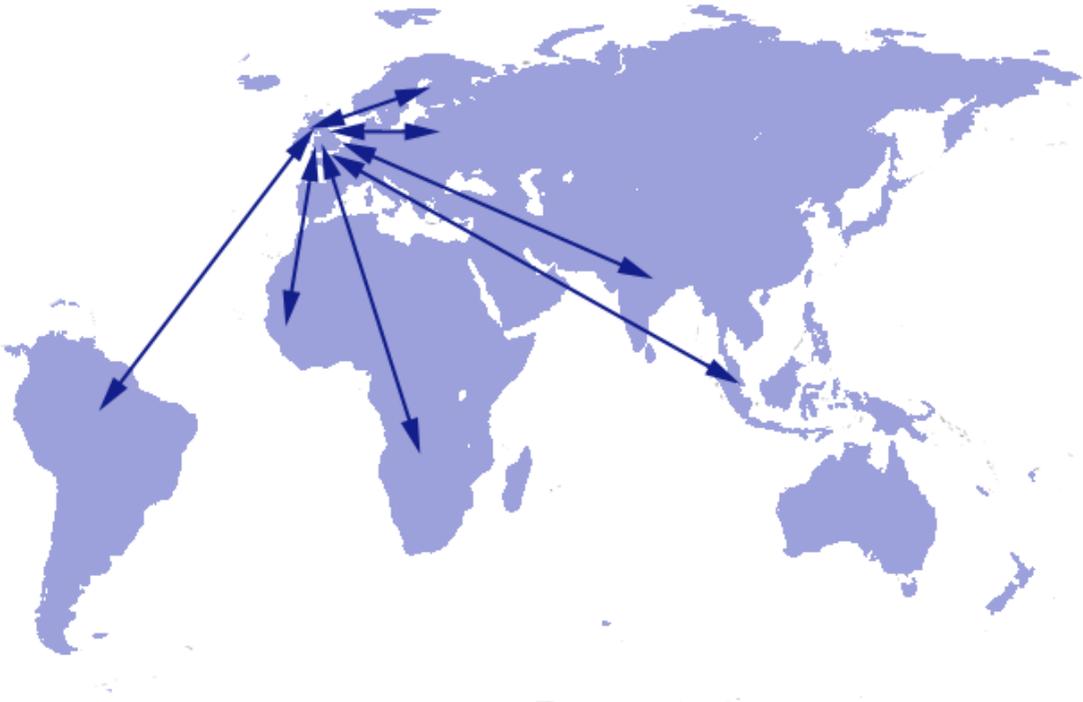




BCMS  
**Crosslinks**

# Sharing in Mission

How to engage in gospel partnership with your Mission Partner



**GOD'S WORD TO GOD'S WORLD**

## Why Partnership?

Ever since Jesus commanded the apostles to '*go therefore and make disciples of all nations*' (Matthew 28:19), this has been the Church's mandate for engaging in God's mission to bring salvation '*to the end of the earth*' (Acts 1:8).

Central to this is the idea of ***gospel partnership*** or, in Greek, '*koinōnia*': an active pursuit towards a common purpose, and participation in a shared activity. How does this relationship look between a church and a Mission Partner? The Apostle John writes:

*'You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.'* (3 John:6-8)

Likewise, our challenge is to 'send' out Mission Partners '*in a manner worthy of God.*' The 'sending' of a Mission Partner is one way of providing workers for the harvest field - and the care and encouragement that Mission Partners receive from their sending church are God's own method of caring for and encouraging them. Though, as John points out, churches and their Mission Partners are '*fellow workers*', which means being a community that shares joys and struggles and, above all, rejoices in seeing God's glory through engaging with his mission.

Paul tells us in Philippians that gospel partnership includes mutual prayer, care, giving and suffering, as well as ministry and discipleship. The following pages outline some ways in which your church can engage in partnership with a Mission Partner.

## Getting Started

In any church it can be easy to assume someone else is looking out for your Mission Partner - both in terms of communication and prayer. Alternatively, your Mission Partner could be overloaded by emails from too many members of the congregation asking similar questions. To ensure your Mission Partner is neither forgotten about nor overwhelmed, we suggest:

- Designate a key contact to maintain regular communication with your Mission Partner as well as with Crosslinks. They can receive news and prayer points and report back to the congregation. Likewise, this person can share the church's news and prayer needs with the Mission Partner. (Please contact [cmt@crosslinks.org](mailto:cmt@crosslinks.org) or phone 020 8691 6111 and ask to speak to the Church Partnerships Co-ordinator to let us know their details.)
- If you have several Mission Partners you may like to designate them to specific small groups, so each is prayed for and communicated with fully and regularly—rather than briefly and infrequently!
- Display information about your Mission Partner in a prominent place in your church, so the whole congregation can see who your Mission Partners are. Crosslinks will send you display posters to use (unless your Mission Partner's work is sensitive or they are based in an insecure country).
- Before your Mission Partner is deployed, arrange a visit between them and the congregation, so that all the church members feel ownership and responsibility for your Mission Partner. If a visit is not possible, organise a Skype call for the whole church to interact with your Mission Partner.

## Partnership in prayer

*'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'* Philippians 4:6-7

Just as Paul prayed for the Philippian church who were in partnership with him (Philippians 1: 9-11), and as they prayed for him (Philippians 4:6-7), we are to partner with our Mission Partners in mutual prayer, out of personal concern and putting gospel priorities first. The Philippian church serve as a great example of this; though Paul was imprisoned, they were not exhorted to pray for his release (which would lessen his personal discomfort) but instead to rejoice in the gospel opportunities he had been given (Philippians 1:12-14). Some ideas for putting this into practice include:

### When?

- Pray for your Mission Partner in the Sunday service as a regular part of the intercessions
- Ensure the Sunday School and Youth Group are praying for your Mission Partners
- The small group that is linked to a specific Mission Partner can pray for them whenever they meet
- Arrange a prayer group that meets specifically to pray for gospel progress where your Mission Partner is working

### How?

- Crosslinks will send prayer letters by post or by email from your Mission Partner three times a year
- Your Mission Partner may choose to send additional monthly email updates to your church, to update you on current prayer needs
- If there is an urgent need, Crosslinks or your Mission Partner will contact you for prayer

### **What?**

- Pray for their country: leadership, current events, social issues, people, etc.
- Pray for opportunities for your Mission Partner to share the gospel with those they meet
- Pray for fruitful work that will bring glory to God and further his kingdom
- Pray that your Mission Partner will make time to read the Bible and pray that the Lord will use these times to refresh and sustain them
- Pray for health, safety and for times of rest
- If you have a Mission Partner family, pray for the children to grow up to know and love the Lord and to serve him themselves. Pray that the children settle well; for friends, school, etc.
- Pray for good friendships and real fellowship

*(see Recommended Reading (p 11): A Spiritual Reformation, for more tips on praying in line with God's agenda)*

Your Mission Partner will want to pray for your church too, so let them know what is happening and of any special prayer requests. For example, tell your Mission Partner what you are looking at in Sunday services, what your home group is studying, or of any upcoming evangelistic events.

## Partnership in care

*'I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.'* Philippians 4:10

Paul's relationship with his partners, the Philippian church, was one of deep affection (see Philippians 1:8 and 4:1). Likewise, we are encouraged to develop warm, personal relationships with our Mission Partners; to share news, to inform and encourage and, where possible, to visit them. Some suggestions of what this may look like include:

- Write to or email your Mission Partner about their life, ministry, joys and struggles - and share about your life and church too
- Skype call or phone your Mission Partner - where possible make this part of the Sunday service or small group meeting
- Send them your church magazine, prayer diary and links to sermons
- Send resources to help your Mission Partner in their work
- Send occasional 'care parcels' containing their favourite chocolate, toiletries or other things that they might miss (N.B. check first that your Mission Partner won't incur heavy customs duties!)
- Remember Christmas and birthdays and send cards or presents
- Where appropriate, encourage links between children in your church and any children of your Mission Partner
- Make a personal visit to see your Mission Partner, or organise a small group from your church to go. (Please inform Crosslinks if you intend to visit, so that we can advise on suitable timing and pass on any other information that it would be helpful for you to know.)

Your Mission Partner will want to show their care for your church in practical ways also. Things they may like to do include sending you helpful resources, posting cards at Christmas or for the church's anniversary, and encouraging and advising the congregation in local cross-cultural mission. This is your Mission Partner's area of expertise, so do let them help you in your church's evangelism.

## Partnership in Giving

*'Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.'* Philippians 4:14-18

The third strand of Paul's partnership with the Philippian church was one of financial support. Paul makes it clear that he was grateful for their ongoing commitment to him. Some tips for how you can give financially include:

- Think about how you would like to collect the donations for your Mission Partner. Will you have an annual gift day, or an appeal, or set aside a percentage of your annual budget?
- Involve the whole church in giving towards your Mission Partner. The Sunday School may like to take a weekly collection, a Toddler Group or Seniors' Fellowship could organise a fundraiser coffee morning - think creatively!
- Agree the amount you pledge to give in advance but review it regularly, along with the duration of your commitment
- Let Crosslinks know when you intend to make your gift and in how many instalments. Then please do be punctual in your payments
- If giving by cheque, please make it payable to 'Crosslinks'

Mutual partnership in giving is modelled by Paul and his behaviour towards the Philippians: *'My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus'* (Philippians 4:19). Paul confidently prayed that God would reward the church for their generosity. Your Mission Partner will be doing likewise for you.

## Additional suggestions

### Before they go

Preparing to go overseas can be an unsettling time: logistical decisions need to be made; finances need to be raised; emotions can range from excitement through to nerves and sadness at leaving friends and family. Some ways in which a sending church can help at this time include:

- Accommodation: Could somebody in the church offer your Mission Partner a place to stay, if needed, in the days before departure?
- Travel: Would anyone be able to take your Mission Partner to the airport on the day they leave?
- Property advice: Is there somebody in the church who can advise on letting property, if your Mission Partner needs to arrange this? Could you help find a suitable tenant?
- Financial advice: Is there a financial advisor in the church who could advise your Mission Partner on financial matters?

### Commissioning Service

Before your Mission Partner leaves, we recommend a Commissioning Service, to recognise, endorse and pray for the work that they are preparing to do. If your Mission Partner has several partner churches, this service will occur at just one church, with representatives from other churches invited to attend.

The Commissioning Service is a great opportunity for the whole church to identify with your Mission Partner and to commit to partnering with them. Do recognise Crosslinks in this service too, as the Mission Society is a huge part of the process. Where possible, someone from Crosslinks will attend (or even preach) at the Commissioning Service and we are more than happy to provide literature and resources to hand out to the congregation. Get in touch if you would like anything posted to you.

## On home leave

When your Mission Partner returns to the UK on home leave, it is a great time for relationship building and for the church to find out more about your Mission Partner's work and news. Your Mission Partner is a member of your church, so will want to spend time with you. Make arrangements in advance; they may wish to spend the whole weekend meeting the congregation but, on the other hand, they could be overwhelmed by a long list of activities! Discuss between you how you can best serve each other at this time. Some suggestions for making the most of your Mission Partner's time with your church include:

- Ask your Mission Partner to give a presentation in a Sunday service
- Host a 'bring and share' lunch after the service, where your Mission Partner can speak at greater length about their work
- Invite your Mission Partner to come to a mission committee meeting to feed back to the committee and pray together
- Invite your Mission Partner to do a Sunday School/Youth Group talk
- Organise an 'International Mission Weekend' with activities, food and games themed around the country your Mission Partner is serving in, with opportunities for your Mission Partner to present about their ministry, and plenty of time for fellowship
- Arrange a workshop where your Mission Partner can help your church learn about cross-cultural evangelism and how to engage in mission in the local community

## **When they return**

Returning to the UK after a lengthy period overseas is often difficult: the UK will have changed, your Mission Partner will have changed, they will have left behind a place and a work that they might not return to again. Crosslinks provides returning Mission Partners with handbooks for adults and children and suggests suitable conferences for them to attend, which focus on 're-entry'. Your support at this time will be highly valued by your Mission Partner - just listening to their experiences, encouragements and challenges can make a big difference.

Mission Partners will continue to be paid for up to six months after their return home (provided they have served with Crosslinks for at least three years and have not yet found alternative employment).

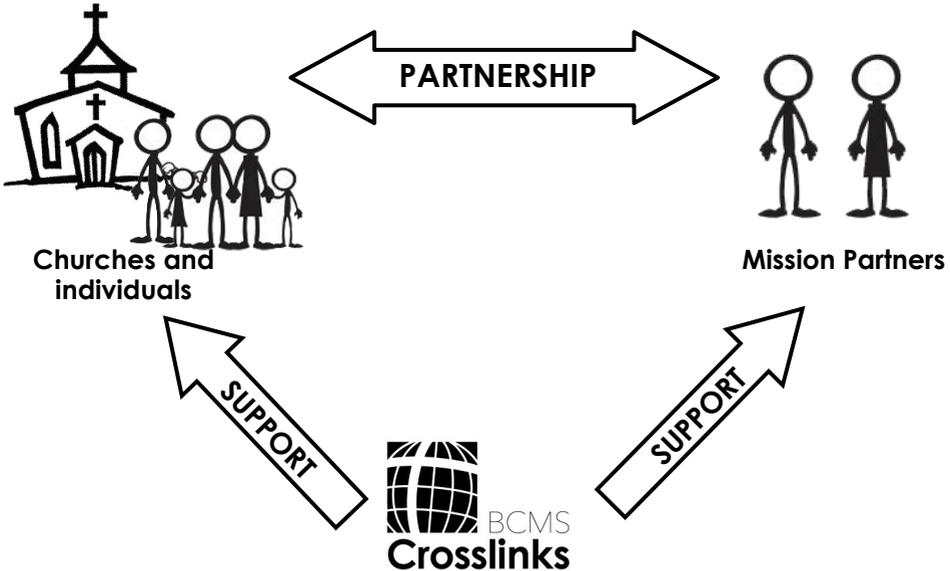
### **Practical help**

There are also practical ways in which your church might be able to help, both whilst your Mission Partner is on home leave and when they return. For example:

- Accommodation
- Car
- Schooling: Your knowledge of local schools could be beneficial, especially if decisions need to be made whilst they are still overseas
- Holiday: Is there anyone who could offer a holiday home for a few days of your Mission Partner's home leave?
- Bulky items, eg. car seats or children's cots

## Partnership Model

Crosslinks is here to serve and facilitate your partnership with your Mission Partner. Do get in touch using the contact details overleaf if you would like further advice, help, resources or ideas.



## Recommended Reading

- Partnership in the Gospel Bible Study, *Crosslinks* (download from [www.crosslinks.org/resources/study-materials](http://www.crosslinks.org/resources/study-materials) or call 020 8691 6111)
- A Spiritual Reformation, *Don Carson* (Available from The Good Book Company: [www.thegoodbook.co.uk](http://www.thegoodbook.co.uk) or 0333 123 0880)
- Lambs dancing with Wolves, *Michael Griffiths* (published by Monarch Books)
- God's Mission Our Mission, Children's Learning Resource, *Crosslinks* (Call 020 8691 6111 or email [cmt@crosslinks.org](mailto:cmt@crosslinks.org) to request a copy)

