



MISSIONARY PARTNERSHIPS: EXPECTATIONS & ROLES

Missionaries need a network of partner churches and individuals as well as adequate accountability in order to accomplish their work effectively and maintain personal and spiritual wholeness in the process. The responsibilities of various parties in this relationship may vary depending on agency, denominational and congregational policies as well as the particulars of a given situation. Christian Reformed World Missions emphasizes the importance of a commissioning church which takes on added responsibility as compared to other supporting churches. In the case of ordained ministers and ministry associates, the calling church and classis have additional roles.

PARTNER Churches

- Work to increase the congregation's vision and passion for global outreach, educating the people regarding their Biblical missions responsibilities.
- Commit a generous amount of financial support to their missionaries, commensurate with the congregation's financial resources.
- Volunteer on-site assistance, expertise, and other resources as needed in order to enable missionaries to accomplish the task for which they have been sent.
- Are committed not only to the missionaries, but their ministry goals, i.e. the church is not focused just on their missionaries as people but also highly committed to achieving the purpose for which the workers are sent.
- Disseminate information from missionaries to the congregation and intercede fervently and specifically in both corporate and private prayer.
- Maintain a steady stream of communication to the missionaries in order to foster a continued sense of support from the local body of Christ.
- Provide adequate opportunity for the missionary to report what God is doing through the missionary's work.

The SENDING (or Commissioning) Church

- Recruits and carefully screens potential cross-cultural workers.
- Develops future missionaries' gifting, godly character, and ministry readiness by providing varied service opportunities inside and outside the church context.
- Takes special responsibility for communication to the missionaries in order to foster a continued sense of their membership in the local body of Christ.
- Delegates on-field supervision to agency administration.
- Works with the agency to ensure adequate health care, pension, etc.
- Provides pastoral care throughout the workers' ministry in cooperation with the agency, including the missionary in the congregational system of "home visitation."
- Works with the agency to address on-field problems based on healthy, open communication and mutual respect.
- Works closely with the agency to resolve crisis situations such as health emergencies, evacuations, physical attack, etc.
- Assists missionaries with family concerns.

The CALLING Church's Council

(for an ordained minister or ministry associate)

- Bears primary responsibility for supervision of the missionary's doctrine and life, and therefore regularly visits with the missionary about these matters.
- Is the primary actor with regard to special discipline in case of a deviation from sound doctrine or godly conduct.

The MISSIONARIES

- Actively participate as much as possible in the ministry and body life of the sending church.
- Recognize that the affirmation of the sending church is a critical ingredient of God's call to missionary service.
- Understand and accept the sending church's expectations and requirements for service.
- Believe that they are to be accountable to the sending church, even though direct supervision has been delegated by the church to the agency.
- Report to the supporting churches regularly and honestly regarding goals, ministry accomplishments, and personal and family well-being.
- Reserve time for face-to-face contact with the sending congregation in order to minister and be ministered to.
- Make the sending church aware of the process of major decision-making (regarding location, ministry focus, agency, resignation/retirement, etc.).
- Inform the supporting churches regularly of prayer requests and answers as evidence that they believe ministry results are dependent on intercessory prayer.



- Facilitate the investment of church resources (time, finances, gifts, and other expertise) to achieve ministry goals, recognizing that the whole church, not just missionaries, are called to the missions task.
- Recognize that part of their task is to assist in the global vision casting and mobilization of the supporting churches.
- Do not attempt to put church and agency leaders in an adversarial relationship in order to serve their own ends.

The AGENCY

- Recognizes the key role of the local church in missionary sending.
- Is committed to insuring that churches, missionary, and agency are communicating regularly.
- Requires that potential missionaries be enthusiastically recommended by their local church which affirms their maturity, missionary call, gifting, and experience prior to appointment.
- Provides quality leadership and spiritual care for the missionaries on the field.
- Serves the missionaries from the home offices to free them as much as possible to focus on their ministry assignment abroad and their ministry to supporting churches.
- Consults with the sending church if major problems arise.
- Provides quality pre-field training and opportunities for life-long learning throughout service in order to maximize missionaries' ministry impact.
- Involves the sending church whenever major decisions such as termination of service are considered.
- Keeps the sending church aware of the effectiveness of missionaries' ministries and their personal well-being.
- Seeks to maximize the benefit of home assignment for the missionaries, the churches, and the field.
- Provides assistance to churches in global vision development and mobilization.

Adapted by permission from "The Sending Triangle"
published by Catalyst Services www.catalystservices.org.