

What Is A Partnering Church?

A Partnering Church works alongside an existing International Mission Board missionary team to advance evangelism and church planting among that team's focus people group.

A Partnering Church can choose to serve a missionary team in one of two ways:

1. Help implement a particular strategy for the team, like youth ministry or leadership development.
2. Commit to reach a segment of the focus people group that is not currently being engaged.

A Partnering Church wants "more than just another mission trip." It wants to be intentional in making a long-term impact for the kingdom. The church can be large or small. All that matters is a willingness to go!

A Partnering Church is willing to:

- fulfill their agreed-upon task, which could take at least 3-5 years of regular visits to the field.
- get involved at every level. Even those who don't go in person faithfully intercede in prayer for their people group and on-the-field teams.
- sacrifice personal convenience to take the Gospel to some of the world's most difficult-to-reach, out-of-the-way places.

Does It Really Work?

Yes! Check out this story of a Partnering Church in action:

First Baptist Church Hurst, Texas, Partnering with the Songhai Team

Missionaries are working with the Songhai people in parts of Niger and Mali, but they needed some help to reach the 45-mile, dusty gravel "road to Mehanna." This road has 48 villages of Songhai people who had never heard about Christ, so First Baptist Church Hurst, Texas stepped up.

The church sent a group on a "vision trip" to see the Songhai and learn their culture. The team handed out more than 1,000 cassettes, 63 videos and 50 Bibles in hopes of finding villages that would let them visit again. All but one village accepted the gifts, and two chiefs offered places for future teams to stay and teach about Jesus.

Children's mission groups studied lessons about the Songhai people to coincide with the team's next trip. Some also plan to make framed pictures of the chiefs to return to the villages.

Many more people participated through prayer.

"Our church had thousands praying for the Songhai on the Mehanna Road," explains Marc Tolson, who led the vision trip team. "We were just the Fed-Ex or UPS guys delivering the packages on the ground."

Expectations of the Partnering Church

A Partnering Church is expected to...

1. Make a long-term commitment (minimum of 3-5 years) to work with missionaries with the shared goal of seeing a self-sustaining church planting movement among your chosen people group.
2. Employ strategies consistent with missiological principles that will ensure church reproduction in the African context without creating dependency on outside resources.
3. Plant Baptist churches. While partnerships can be developed with other Christian organizations, new churches should be Baptist in doctrine and practice.
4. Form a Leadership Team that will keep a compelling vision before the church and enlist the involvement of the entire body. The Leadership Team will be responsible for building a prayer network; coordinating and training short-term mission teams; and evaluating and reporting progress to the church and the missionary team with whom they are working.
5. In cooperation with the existing missionary team, develop and implement a plan for reaching the people group.
6. Train and regularly send teams to work in West Africa (ideally at least 4-6 times per year).
7. Become self-facilitating. While on-field missionaries will provide assistance for initial teams, the church is expected to become increasingly responsible for logistical arrangements such as local transportation, housing, meals, currency exchange, translators, etc.