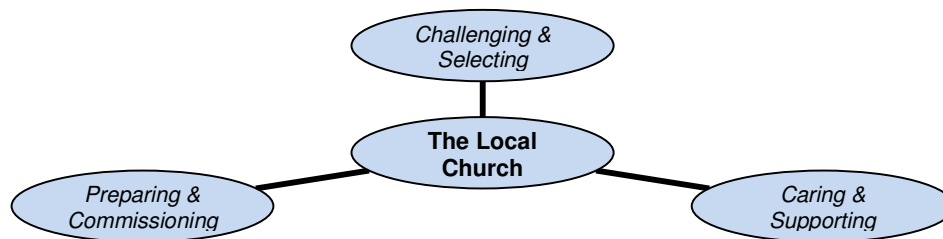




WORLD FOCUS TEAM

Assisting Local Churches and Christians in World Mission



Resource Paper 7

Partnership in Cross-cultural Mission

At the outset it is recognised that, like salvation, mission belongs to God and that the church is commissioned to complete God's mission to make disciples of all nations.

This paper addresses situations where churches and mission agencies co-operate in sending out church members to serve cross-culturally overseas; it is not prescriptive, rather, it sets out appropriate roles for partners. Situations vary and adaptation of these roles will be needed in certain situations.

Each of the partners in long-term cross-cultural mission outreach has a significant part to play. The partners are:

- ❖ The missionary
- ❖ The commissioning church
- ❖ The sending agency
- ❖ The host agency – this term is used throughout whether it refers to an overseas church, expatriate mission agency or national agency.

There should be 'shared ownership' of the missionary service by all the above partners in the spirit of mutual trust and by means of a commitment to open communication and consultation. This process must respect the commissioning church's pastoral responsibility for the missionary, the sending agency's responsibility to support and service the missionary and the host agency's responsibility for the on-site project and the missionary's role in that project.

- ❖ **The missionary** should be called by God, and show evidence of appropriate ministry gifts. S/he should recognise clearly the importance of accountability to God, to his/her commissioning church and to the sending and host agencies and understand and accept the respective roles of all the partners.
- ❖ **The commissioning church leaders** are responsible to:
 - test and affirm the member's call to mission based on their prior knowledge of him/her and their prayerful consideration of the appropriateness of the service opportunity under consideration

- evaluate the member's spiritual and emotional condition as being sufficiently robust for the stresses of cross-cultural overseas service
- provide pastoral support
- provide guidance at all key decision points
- ensure consistent prayer support
- ensure practical and financial support

❖ **The sending agency** is responsible for:

- the selection process and the preparation of the candidate for overseas service
- assisting the candidate in developing a prayer and financial support team and in exercising good practice in communicating with prayer and financial supporters
- guide the candidate through the many practical issues relative to overseas service including visa procurement, medical examinations and inoculations, pension provision, UK tax procedures medical insurance and channelling of financial support to the field of service
- advise on such matters as children's education on the field and further education on return home
- consider the missionary's readiness to commence service on the basis of their evaluation of his spiritual and emotional robustness and the prayer and financial support in place.
- liaise with the host agency as appropriate.

❖ **The host agency is** responsible for:

- the ministry in which the missionary is involved
- orientation of the missionary on arrival, including providing language and culture learning
- assignment of the missionary to precise duties within the project and the oversight of, and guidance in, his/her work including the provision of skill up-grading as needed
- meeting of day-to day pastoral and fellowship needs
- meeting the legal needs of residence in the host country including the provision and renewal of visas
- providing guidance on meeting housing and educational needs of the family
- periodical reviews of the missionary's service
- planning for contingencies or emergencies and in carrying out those plans should the need arise

It should be noted here that the significant number of differing types of host agencies means that **not all of the above responsibilities will apply in each and every situation.**

Prior to home leave there should be consultation between all partners concerning home leave arrangements. On commencing home leave, both the sending agency and the home church will de-brief the missionary and provide guidance and practical assistance as appropriate.

In Conclusion

The various responsibilities indicated above cannot always be contained within the brief of one partner and the partners need to work together to adequately address situations that arise. An example of this would be when conflict between workers develops and the situation is serious enough to warrant the involvement of all the partners.

Hence the importance, as already mentioned, of shared responsibility, mutual trust and consultation between the partners.