

## *An emerging vision for a radical new commitment to global Christian community*

*We believe that God is taking us on a journey toward a deeper understanding of partnership among God's people. We pledge to God and to each other to pursue what partnership means and to practice it as God gives us strength.*

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## A COVENANT OF PARTNERSHIP

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### **Partnership is God's mandate.**

In giving us the Great Commission, God calls us to partner with him in global mission. Our God is a missionary God and we are to be a missionary people. Jesus prayed that God's people "be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me" (John 17:23). The oneness of the global Christian community (enhanced by working in partnership) is a powerful testimony to Jesus as God's anointed one. Partnership describes both our relationship with God in mission and our relationship with others as a means of accomplishing that mission.

God Himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is the perfect model of partnership: one essence of three distinct persons of equal importance, each with different roles performed for a common purpose.

Therefore, we do not engage in partnership simply because it is cost-effective or pragmatic. We do so because partnership reflects God's nature, demonstrates Christian unity, and draws people to God. It is how all mission should be done everywhere.

### **Partnership is mutual.**

True partnership embraces the reality that every partner has something to give and something to gain. What they give, they do so sacrificially. What they gain, they receive humbly. No partner is greater than another in what it contributes.

Therefore, we acknowledge every partner's contributions, large or small, according to God's gifts. If we are perceived as the giver, we also receive something valuable in the partnership. If we are perceived as the receiver, we also have something valuable to give. It is the partnership that, by God's grace, achieves the vision.

### **Partnership is diverse and dynamic.**

No partnership is static or exactly the same as another. Partnership can range from a single focus, such as funding, or it can be more full-bodied. It can happen once, intermittently, or be long-term. Relationships change over time depending on the vision, maturity, size, and capacity of the partners. Therefore, we celebrate the various expressions of healthy partnership and

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*"...May they be brought  
to complete unity to let  
the world know that you  
sent me...."*

John 17:23

reject a “one-size-fits-all” mentality. The various levels, forms, and stages of partnership reflect the diversity of God’s people as well as the diversity of needs in the world.

**Partnership is most effective through multiple networks.**

No single agency can bring all the resources necessary to meet the needs of God’s people and of the world. God values humility over pride and collaboration over isolation.

Therefore, multiple networks of partnerships are often the best way to serve God’s Church and to meet the world’s needs. In almost every case, at least one of the partners in the network will have an incarnational presence where God’s people are manifesting the love of Christ.

**Partnership is measurable.**

Healthy partnership is not afraid to measure the benefits of partnership. We will not shy away from setting goals and measuring results. We affirm the value of asking questions and acknowledge the need for mutual transparency and accountability.

Therefore, while we reject excessive quantifying, we affirm that mutual evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative results of a partnership is important if we are to be good and faithful stewards of the resources of God’s people.

**Partnership is relational—and messy.**

Partnership is as much about relationship as it is about strategic outcomes. It is done with others, and those others matter.

But we live in a fallen world where personalities and cultures clash. Unmet expectations lead to misunderstanding and disappointment. Forgiveness is infrequent. Speaking the truth in love is seldom practiced.

We must live the Great Commandment. God created us to live in communion with Him, to participate in His nature, and to imitate His character. When the Apostle Paul described his partners in the gospel, he used language such as “I have you in my heart” and “how I long for you with the affection of Christ Jesus.” We are called to pray for one another, to suffer with one another, to rejoice with one another.

The best partnerships arise out of rich relationships based on shared passion, mutual goals, and much time spent together. There is no greater work of partnership than the building of relationships in love by which all peoples will see Christ.

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This is where Partners International is today. We still need to work out the implementation. Our understanding of partnership must dictate our actions; it cannot remain theoretical. Change will not come easy. This emerging vision needs further work, which is why we invite the global missions community to contribute to the discussion, one that we pray will radically improve the way God’s people do mission together—so that the world may believe. We are ready to listen to God and to each other.



“Partners International continues to be our model for the kind of projects, the type of thinking, and the creative planning that we want to see from mission organizations. Thank you for the hard work you do in finding the right partner ministries that are at the heart of the real needs of the least Christian regions.”

- William and Elaine Lo,  
Donors



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