

## **East Main Mission Partner Analysis Purpose and Values**

**The Goal: Fewer and Deeper** - When churches invest more in fewer mission partners, it is better for all involved:

- **Empowering Focus**: Having fewer, deeper mission relationships reduces the time missionaries must spend raising and maintaining financial support. This allows them more time to devote to the mission work itself. It also limits the pressure to leave the field in order to “connect” with and consolidate their donor base. For churches, fewer, deeper mission connections help to focus their attention as well. It enhances internal communication and contributes to mission as an active force in congregations for discipleship. As more people gain awareness, they become more engaged, invested, and prayerful.
- **Authentic Partnership**: Churches and mission workers can better know each other, which increases the chances of honest dialogue, unified vision, and shared values. As a relationship of trust develops, both parties can risk more in their communication and ministry. Churches can be more responsive to the needs and aims of mission partners. Mission workers can better inform and involve churches.
- **Robust Accountability**: Fewer and deeper commitments means that churches have a greater stake and responsibility in mission efforts. This invites them to also step-up their missionary care (prayer, encouragement, focus, pastoral support, etc.). The mission partner also has a greater incentive and opportunity to share the true scope and nature of their ministry (i.e. even disappointments), and to invite genuine participation by congregations. There is also real incentive to work through problems and challenges that emerge, or conflicts that arise.
- **Increased Capacity** - With fewer partners, churches can better coordinate their efforts, build stronger networks of support, and become less distracted by ancillary appeals for funding. Likewise, mission partners can plan further out, better utilize networks of support, and work primarily in those areas of passion and giftedness that drew them to mission work in the first place.

### **Mission Core-Commitments/Values:**

1. **Evangelism** (Our Function) – An essential commitment to share the good news of the gospel (i.e. Jesus is Savior and Lord) through word and deed in ways that intend discipleship and promote the growth and development of the church, as a living witness, a loving community, and a mission capacity in the world.
2. **Holistic Mission** (Our Form) – Ministry that values the whole person (mind, soul, heart and strength), engages the complex social, cultural, political, and economic realities in which people live, and takes seriously the comprehensive work of Christ to “make all things new”. This means that frontier missions, evangelism, church planting, and Christian leadership development cannot be divorced from

relief and development, Crisis Care and Disaster Assistance, and work that promotes Justice and Advocacy. While ministry partners may not do all these things, they will necessarily understand themselves within this larger framework of what it means to be a witness to Jesus Christ and the reality of Kingdom of God, secured on the cross, inaugurated in the resurrection, and empowered by the Spirit of God.

3. Commitment to Global Christianity – In light of the profound shift in the global Christian community (i.e. over 60% of the world's Christians are culturally non-western), our mission engagement must account for the increasing voice and capacity of this “majority world”. This trend has been popularly captured in the phrase “from everywhere to everyone”. It also means that extra care should be taken to equip and facilitate mission from and by “majority world” partners. This stands in marked contrast to more traditional models that send the “west to the rest.” Partnerships, that themselves cross racial, ethnic and cultural boundaries better represent the radical claims of the family of God and stretch all involved to hold first and fast to their foundational identity in Christ. These types of partnerships also have the potential to expose bias, promote humility, and cultivate imagination for mission.
4. Focus on the Least and the Lost – We will concentrate our energies on the most marginalized and forgotten, and those with little or no access to the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ (i.e. “unreached” peoples). Scripture routinely focuses our attention on orphans, those in prison, widows, refugees, the poor (hungry, thirsty, homeless, those without access to land or other means of economic subsistence), the sick, and the oppressed. We take this emphasis seriously.
5. Opportunity for Active Participation – True partnership requires relationship, but more than simply knowing and liking each other there needs to be a sense that we have a meaningful stake in the ministry. This means that opportunities for significant exchange are important to sustain and deepen our mission engagements. Regular interaction might mean that we have the potential to regularly send short-term teams to both experience and partner in mission service or it might involve us as the hosts who extend hospitality to our mission partners, or it may invite us into more regular written communication and more serious intercessory prayer.
6. Theological Congruence – It is important that the theological affirmations of our mission partners are compatible with our own. This is not to say that the greater the overlap the better the partnership. After all, as Presbyterians we seek to be reformed, always reforming, a notion that confidently grasps revealed truth, while it humbly resists doctrinal rigidity. Such a view admits subjective analysis, but it also suggests certain litmus tests for partnership (i.e. affirmations like, “Jesus is Lord”, catholic and historic confessions like The Apostles and Nicene Creed, as well as additional Reformed and Evangelical principles). These waters can get rather murky, so in an effort to promote clarity and simplicity, we suggest “Evangelical Christianity” as a pretty good baseline. This helps to minimize denominationalism. It is also a term that translates across cultures, and it is one

that incorporates the most essential, historic, and foundational affirmations of the earliest creeds.

7. Financial Accountability – While we may desire that all our partners would be members of the ECFA, our commitment to missions on the frontier may at times stretch this value. However, we ought to be committed due diligence in relation to our partners, and to work with them to develop best practices regarding financial management, stewardship and accountability. At the very least this means internal integrity, external accountability, and financial transparency.
8. Personal Connection and Corporate Passion - A responsible Mission program must seek to steward God-given interests, relationships, and passions. However, this is not to be confused with popularity. Stewardship requires that we also not abdicate our responsibility to inform and guide mission engagement. In this way we affirm that the hard work of discernment is to bring our passions, aims, commitments, ambitions, and practices into alignment with the Lord, and not to simply see missions as one more avenue for us to project ourselves.

#### **Other Important Considerations:**

- Local (25%) and Global (75%) Engagements – While local mission engagement may help to excite and sustain passion for our global mission involvement, the opposite is also true, our global exposure will help us to see our neighborhood differently. We mean to continue to nourish both platforms and partnerships in ways commensurate with our other stated values. Where possible, overlaps in emphasis should be sought as a way to further develop a coherent and easily shared mission vision.
- Diversity – We recognize the importance of being sensitive to develop a mission portfolio that reflects the plurality of geographic regions, people groups, religious blocks, issues, organizational structures, and mission work emphasis. This is a primary concern especially since our Mission emphasis can fix our attention on significant local and global realities and how God is at work in and through them.
- Potential for Presbyterian Connection – Presbyterian Mission has a rich history and despite numerous distractions in the recent past, we are hopeful that a new chapter of positive engagement is before us. In an attempt to nurture these seeds of renewal, we will seek to creatively and constructively network with existing Presbyterian mission workers and advocates around the world. While this does not necessary mean a bias toward direct PC(USA) mission partnerships, we do intend to look for synergy between our partners and the mission resources of the PC(USA). Where these naturally exist or prayerfully emerge, we will be encouraged to increasingly develop our mission partnership.