

## Getting Started: Encourager Church Resource

In a hyper-connected and socially networked world, close partnerships with specific field personnel unleash the power of personal relationships to transform lives. The Spirit works in and among our relationships for mutual transformation of our congregations, field personnel and those among whom we seek to serve.

CBF Encourager Churches are essential components to the work of Fellowship field personnel around the world. Such a relationship invites the church into an intimate or first-hand role in missions. It returns the church to its historic role in the sending of members of its body into the world as a transformative witness of the presence of Christ. Here we observe an example where the local church joins field personnel in living out the commitments of cultivating beloved community, bearing witness to Jesus Christ and seeking transformational development.

This resource is designed to help your church begin organizing your connection with field personnel and their ministries around the world. First, consider the Quick Assessment questions. Review some of the practical ways churches partner with field personnel, then review the sample Encourager Church Covenant with a small group to discern how your congregation will commit.

### Quick Assessment

Let's look for any possible organic connections your church may have:

1. Does your congregation have a historic commitment to a region or a type of mission work?
2. To what kinds of ministries does your church tend to gravitate?
3. What mission and ministry stories energize members?
4. When thinking about international partnerships, how might your church look toward short-term missions in a different part of the world?
5. What would you be looking to learn from your international partners?
6. How might you apply the lessons you learn from that relationship in your own "backyard"?

To view a list of field personnel and read descriptions of their work visit [www.cbf.net/fieldpersonnel](http://www.cbf.net/fieldpersonnel). Global missions can provide additional field personnel profiles for those serving in high security regions.

### Commitment

Often missions committees will try to please everyone by rotating financial support or giving a token amount of support to several ministries. Likewise, in order to keep programming exciting, ministers organize trips to alternating communities. While this is effective in helping churches feel that many needs are being met, this can create instability among organizations and individuals seeking to be a consistent presence. When a church has a defined mission, and when leaders have a clear sense of how God is calling the church to serve, it can lead to growing relationships of sustainable ministry for years to

come. We celebrate the Encourager Church covenant as the highest form of commitment to the work of field personnel. This covenant between field personnel, local churches and CBF encourages mutual roles of support which foster important ministries and transformative relationships.

Encourager Church covenants focus on four major areas – prayer support, administrative support, short-term engagement and financial support. Each area unites churches with the ongoing ministry work of field personnel around the world.

This program seeks to:

- deepen relationships
- cultivate mutual transformation
- bear a consistent witness
- focus financial stewardship

## Imagine the Connection

Every congregation connects with field personnel differently. Below are some ideas from fellow Encourager Churches for how they are forming together with ministries on the field.

- Invite field personnel to video a mission moment to be played in worship or Wednesday night. (This also works in some situations as a live video call!)
- Invite field personnel to write a column for your church newsletter.
- Prayer! Invite field personnel to pray for you and include them on your Wednesday night prayer list. Communicate regularly that you are praying for them.
- Bulletin Boards are totally back “in.” Use lots of photos, a map, two push-pins and a length of string (seriously).
- Invite field personnel to write for your Advent or Lenten devotional guide.
- Provide a car and a home for field personnel to borrow while they are making transitions.
- When planning a short-term mission endeavor, start by asking field personnel what they really need. Sometimes what they need is for you to come be immersed in the culture.
- When mailing a care package, find out if there is an import duty. Some countries charge hefty fees for picking up foreign packages.
- Vacation! If someone in your congregation has vacation property, consider offering that to field personnel for some rest and relaxation, and don’t forget those serving in the U.S.!
- Love offerings are real blessings. If you find your church regularly taking up love offerings, consider inviting members to make monthly ongoing financial commitments to your field personnel.

## Sample Encourager Church Covenant:



# Encourager Church Covenant

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) Global Missions agrees to enter into a Global Missions partnership with **Names of Field Personnel and Encourager Church**. This partnership is for 5 years and subject to renewal. Both parties reserve the right to end this agreement with notification to the other party.

### The **Field Personnel** will:

- Communicate regularly with the church through prayer requests and ministry updates.
- Serve as speakers and mission advocates to the church in innovative ways including regular visits, phone and video calls.
- Provide financial reports on a regular basis to keep the church apprised of the financial health of their ministry.
- Explore opportunities for short-term engagements, missions education, consulting and spiritual formation through mission.

### The **Church** will:

- Provide prayer support – by regularly praying for the Field Personnel and their families; keeping the prayer needs before the congregation and creating a prayer group to pray for field personnel, their family, ministry and partners regularly.
- Provide administrative support – We will print and distribute an annual newsletter.
- Promote ways for members to grow in their involvement in missions – such as short-term engagement, mission bible studies and other CBF Global Missions resources.
- Provide financial support that is faithful to our commitment.

### **CBF Global Missions** will:

- Serve as a mechanism to assist in prayer, administration, short-term engagements and financial support and accountability.
- Provide ministerial and moral support through supervision, continuing education and member care.
- Seek to promote this partnership as a model among other CBF churches and organizations.
- Receive your contributions and pledges and track your contributions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Personnel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
CBF Global Missions Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Next Steps: Developing Your Mission Portfolio

Being an Encourager Church is one aspect of your church's mission engagement. Often when church leaders begin talking about adopting missionaries or designating funding, it brings up overall questions about the church's overall mission strategy. Consider the following discernment guide for developing a portfolio of missions for your church. Contact CBF Global Missions at [engage@cbf.net](mailto:engage@cbf.net) if you have questions or would like to explore consulting with CBF.

With a small group, mission committee, deacons, leadership team, etc. consider how you could complete the following statements:

### *Identify the bright spots:*

1. Our values in mission giving are:
2. Our values in mission service are:
3. We have a history of doing really great work when we:
4. During mission and ministry discussions, we were most excited about:

### *Shine the spot light:*

5. In the coming year we will serve in the following areas:
6. Over the next 5 years we will serve by:
7. In the coming year this group will seek to understand:
8. In the coming year our entire congregation needs to understand:
9. In the coming year our congregation's mission financial commitments are to:
10. Next year our financial commitments will include:
11. Over the next year we will communicate our mission portfolio and plans with the entire congregation by:

### *Illuminate the blind spots:*

12. We have half-heartedly worked when we:
13. We recognized blind spots in our mission portfolio, and they include:
14. Our congregation needs further consulting regarding:
  
15. **In one or two sentences, write what your group feels God is calling your church to do.**