

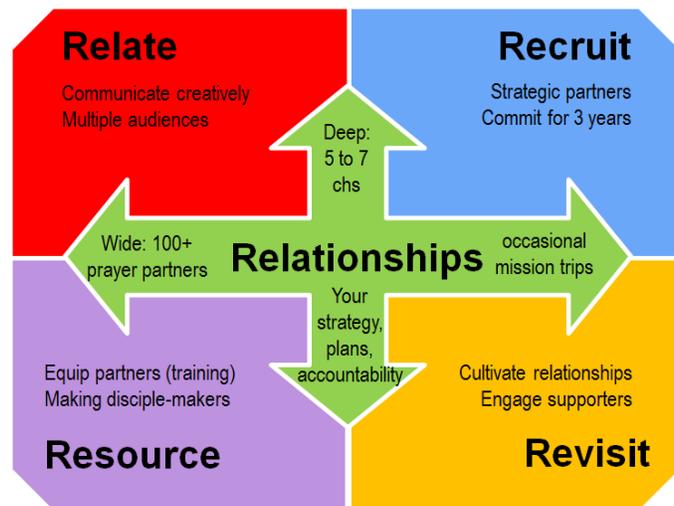
Five Principles for Nurturing Church Relationships

Coaching for **Receiving Churches** in the Macedonia Project
Missouri Baptist Convention



Churches treasure their **RELATIONSHIPS**. We have deep and wide interactions with others. All are important! Some will invest in your church's strategy, plan, and accountability dedicating themselves for three years. Others will be wider making touches with hundreds investing in prayer and occasional mission trips.

The Macedonia Project provides opportunities for churches, associations, seminaries, etc., to align with your church efforts. You must **RELATE** with them through creative and careful communications methods. There will be different audiences that will hear through different channels. We trust that the Lord will **RECRUIT** strategic partners that will commit for three years. You will need to **REVISIT** partners to cultivate quality relationships. Engaging your supporters on a timely basis and in person from time to time will be critical to long-term effectiveness. **RESOURCE** partners that God has sent to partner with you. Train them so that they can be the most effective possible for making disciple-makers.



ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Where do we stand with our church **RELATIONSHIPS**? How can we improve and expand our network?
2. What methods are we using to **RELATE** effectively? How might we address communication to make our efforts to **RELATE** more effective?
3. How could we **RECRUIT** partners to multiply our church's strategy among the lost people in our community? Who can best reinforce and bolster different parts of our strategy?
4. What is needed to **REVISIT** partners to foster closer ties? What networks do our partners have to make contributions to our strategy?
5. Have we developed effective training to **RESOURCE** our partners? What unique training is available for our partners?

Here are some important details that can help partnering churches:



Developing and Maintaining Networks

Identify and understand various types of churches that might help you. There are typically four kinds in Missouri:

1. Macedonia churches will partner long-term. Just as the Apostle Paul maintained a great missionary relationship with the church in Philippi, so can your church. These partners will develop relationships and evangelize without much supervision. They seek to set a godly DNA by modeling the right behavior and then entrusting the new converts and their leaders to the Holy Spirit to guide them (John 16:13). They constantly and consistently identify and engage lostness, typically building upon no other person's missionary work.
2. Antioch churches will send out teams from time to time for various mission trips. They might be turned free, but typically need a personal touch throughout their visit. This type of church maintains their control while seeking to expand their excellence for others to appreciate and in which to participate. This type of church can have a pastor that wants to ensure doctrinal integrity, polity, and practice – his success formula – by launching satellite churches. They can often be “missions-minded” as long as it looks like something they would want to join. Those that they encounter must assimilate into their ways.
3. Jerusalem churches are considered to be the final word on doctrine. The church focuses on excellence and must exert its authority at all times. A pastor of this church can be very authoritarian, greatly admired by his members, and as part of his flock's development will encourage them to take a mission trip each year, right on schedule.
4. Judaizer-type churches typically stay close to home seeking to perfect their own group rather than out bringing the lost to Christ. They are most likely to be among the 75% of MBC churches that have plateaued and are declining. Many are struggling to just survive, but their tradition states that they must keep the home fires burning.

Networks of relationships may exist not only in churches, but also through mission organizations, associations, colleges, seminaries, individuals who work independent of their church, and even others in neighboring state conventions.

Relationships may be initiated through a sense of respect and being consistent in your preparation, communication, and ability to listen. Partners are to be viewed just as called as those in your church. Their task is just different.

Key relationship-builders include:

LOVE Enhance partnering churches' love for the people among whom you evangelize.

KNOW Inform churches of culture, worldview, missiological issues, and strategy

PRAY Keep churches informed of your strategic prayer needs. Don't forget to report back.

GIVE Express gratitude to partners for their contribution. Let them know how MMO, CP, DR, and other offerings help facilitate this partnership.

GO Identify strategic opportunities to engage your church field in partnership together.

Relate

Engaging in Consistent Two-Way Communication

Use many communication tools that best suit you and your partners. Produce a newsletter (www.newsletter4fun.com) and send it out at least monthly.

Develop a blog for free (wordpress.com) and post weekly. Post in social media daily. Experts recommend five Twitter posts every day to maintain and keep interest. Facebook offers a free “page” to post partnering needs and post photos of projects underway.

Content is king to help you relate effectively. Tell stories and sprinkle them sparingly with facts. Brag on what God is doing! Consider strategic points to be Love, Know, Pray, Give, and Go. Always evaluate what has worked in the past. Be ruthless to discard what is not working. Every partner should have their own media “feeds” and post regularly. While you cannot control what they say, the “official” pages will help them stay on track and amplify your messaging.

Partners should share in prayer concerns and join to confront spiritual warfare. Make your prayer request timely. Do not tell others’ stories, but get permission to pray for specific families engaged in the harvest fields being approached by projects.

Practical tips to **relate** with your partners:

- Keep current a growing “contact list” of all supporters and partners to communicate widely, regularly, and effectively.
- Relate through social media (Facebook page, Twitter account, Instagram, etc.)
- Continuously expand your network of supporters and partners.
- Challenge current supporters to advocate on your church’s behalf with others churches and individuals that go beyond the partnering relationship.
- Boldly make “cold calls” to expand your network of relationships.
- Connect with any church or pastor that your church has a relationship with or in the past.
- Check in regularly with the MBC’s Partnership Specialist and the Evangelism/Discipleship Strategist at the MBC in Jefferson City, Mo. www.mobaptist.org
- Collaborate and share best practices through stories and hi-res photos sent to *The Pathway*.

Recruit

Multiplying Efforts by Mobilizing Others

Be an advocate that changes lives and communities with the Gospel. Use your abilities to communicate consistently to recruit others to the cause. You are not in competition with other churches. You are aligned with God’s heartbeat for a lost world.

Recruit others by using every partner’s own communication channels. Jesus said to pray that God would send workers to the harvest field. Communicate those needs far and wide. Consistently inform your partners about the challenges and opportunities. Be accurate about the people (what if they know what you think about them?) and the things you have in your strategy (what if it was on the headlines of your local paper tomorrow?).

Your partners are uniquely fascinated and engaged. Yet, the task is overwhelming! Learning how to share the load, training and empower, give away authority to the glory of God is a bold move. That's why Jesus promised His disciples would be His witnesses when the Holy Spirit gave them power (Acts 1:8). Claim that power and ask others to come over and help you! (Acts 16:9)

As often as possible, recruit **church partners that you most need. If that's prayer partners, go for it. If it's evangelizers, go for it. If it's face painters, storytellers, and illusionists that can hold a crowd of children's (and their parents) interest while introducing them to Jesus, then go for it.** Recruiting workers, not spectators, is the objective.

Churches need to train and bring along workers, but this effort requires robust followers of Jesus who will follow through on their commitment. Respond to those who express a willingness to help. It is your responsibility to take them deeper. Relate to them through communications tools and share best practices and how you have experienced God at work.

Address needs in each part of the Receiving Church's Evangelism Strategy:

- Research: Is information available through surveys that identify lostness priorities?
- Pray: Who is praying and how often?
- Equip: Are volunteers being trained to address the worldview of specific peoples?
- Sow: What does it take for abundantly sowing down the Gospel and God's Word?
- Disciple-making: What happens when people respond? Are new believers discipled?
- Celebrate: Are baptisms a time of rejoicing? What milestones have been achieved?

Identify ways partners can join the church's evangelism strategy.

1. How might partners (adults, students) make contributions?
2. Are there areas of the strategy that your church is not equipped to complete?
3. What strategies will best use partners (adults, students) to gain greater access to the lost?
4. Are there other ways to access people groups and those in your target area? Consider studying <http://peoplegroups.info> and www.mobaptist.org/evangelism/demographics.

Revisit

Prepare to Visit the Sending Church(es)

Pastors and/or Team Leads should plan to visit partner churches at least annually during the three-year partnership. This regular "revisit" should strengthen relationships. Here are a few ideas that work:

1. **In Advance:**
 - a. Prepare to speak with enthusiasm. You'll likely need several length presentations. Work up a full sermon, a 10-minute "praise report," and one three-minute "elevator speech." (Short explanation of what the partnership means if you were on an elevator ride.) Do not always expect to be given 40 minutes to preach. If you're invited to provide a short overview, respect the time and always go shorter than longer. When you respect their time, you show respect to your partners. Note: If you use slides or video clips, keep text

- and voiceover to a minimum. You want to speak over what is projected in order to customize the partnership, lostness, and response.
- b. Prepare a simple “reminder” to leave behind. Ideas include: refrigerator magnets as prayer reminders, bookmarks for Bibles that promotes a website or social media page, or prayer cards for the project are postcards that might be pinned to a bulletin board at church, office, or home.
 - c. Bring the Sending Church a gift sent on behalf of the Receiving Church. This could be a plaque or even local food items that can be shared. Be thoughtful and generous!
 - d. Schedule events in advance. Seek to maximize the visit! Understand the impact of each group. Don’t be shy about asking to speak or meet with combined adult Sunday School classes or sponsoring a youth pizza night. Know how many handouts to bring—and how to get more if needed. Take the pastor and his family to lunch after church (and you pay for it!). Ask the partnering church to print up bulletin inserts that you provide.
2. **Speaking Opportunities:** Put a “face” on the partnership. Be very careful to inspire and motivate in a way that glorifies the Lord. Be available to speak not only during worship services and key meeting times, but also to different groups in the church (Baptist Men, WMU, men’s and women’s ministries, evangelism committee). Time the visit to maximize the time. In church life there are typically just 14 weekends that are ideal due to holidays, weather, sports, and seasonal events. (Avoid blizzards or vacation times.)
 3. **Evaluate Participation:** Celebrate advances and be available for troubleshooting times. Resist “gripe sessions” or being pulled to the side by those who want to “share in love,” but just want to criticize. However, recognize any serious problems such as abuse or problems in the sending church that could affect the Receiving Church’s effectiveness.
 4. **Allow the Sending Church to Love on You and Your Church!** Be gracious and celebrate all that God has done through the partnership. Expressions of care and concern should be appreciated.
 5. **Seek to develop, nurture, and deepen strategic support and partner networks.** Expanding prayer support is one obvious network, but perhaps that is a need for more evangelizers for an upcoming campaign. If a specific people groups with ties overseas have been approached, encourage working with IMB personnel overseas.
 6. **Attend classes / skills updating.** Many Sending Churches have conferences or seminars that would be a blessing to the Receiving Church. Express appreciation to the Sending Church for involving you. Attend and pass along what you learn to your team and church when you return.
 7. **Listen deeply. Keep notes of your interactions.** What is God doing through the partnership to bless the Sending Church? Is there something you can contribute that helps? Who have you met that might provide a key resource lacking on your team? Is there some resource that would help you start a new ministry or plant a church that you did not know about?

Resource

Develop Well-Organized Orientation and Training

When volunteers visit your community ready for evangelism projects, it is a “teachable moment.” Just before is a great time for training and catching last-minute questions. And immediately following the project is the best time for

evaluating responsiveness and learning from those who sacrificed their time to walk beside those in your church.

BEFORE: Pre-visit training

Help the Sending Church(es) understand their purpose, what to expect, and logistics. An overview of the strategy may be presented in video, PowerPoint slides, manual, or other creative communications tool to help others relate to lostness where you serve.

Purpose: These are the tactics they will need to try that contribute to the larger strategy. For instance, help them know that prayerwalking reduces spiritual warfare and impacts receptivity. Each team's purpose might vary a little bit, but the overall strategy evangelism project never wavers. Volunteers need to know that they can't be diverted from the Main Thing. They must not get distracted from addressing lostness during this evangelism partnership.

What to Expect: Each person should know their role. And each person must prioritize sharing the gospel despite what that assignment might be. Can each person share their own testimony? Have they been trained in sensitivity to the needs of the local church and will be encouragers? What do they need to know about the people among whom they will be evangelizing?

Logistics: Sending churches should be very sensitive to protecting children, avoiding abusive situations, and what to do if they are harmed. Sensitivity and security training go hand-in-hand with representing Jesus and your church during the projects. Are there forms to fill out? Do the adults and students on the trip have a personal relationship with Jesus? Have they done witnessing locally before going into a Macedonia-type experience.

DURING: Training on-site

1. Meet and greet volunteers from the Sending Church. Recognize that God has sent them with a unique role. Celebrate in prayer before the Lord for what He is about to do!
2. The Receiving Church pastor or project champion working alongside the Sending Church volunteers should plan to not only welcome, but orient new workers to their harvest field. Take questions. Listen carefully. Pray over any concerns that are raised.
3. This is also a wonderful time to turn visiting volunteers into recruiters – advocates and mobilizers! What can you put into their hands that will help them tell their story when they return back to their local church?
4. Make sure everyone knows what to expect. Review the purpose, what to expect, and logistics straight out of their pre-trip planning. It helps to have everyone on the same page!
5. Encourage reproducibility thinking that multiplies. Help those who have arrived to have as much freedom as possible – self-starters that take initiative.

AFTER: Evaluating the quality of the training

Gather everyone after the event is over and before they go home. Keep the meeting to about an hour. Do not let it become a gripe session, but allow volunteers to provide constructive criticism. Address as many issues as possible. Remember, once they have this experience in their lives, their stories will supersede anything you may talk about or provide in future trainings for other volunteers for this Sending Church. Continue to keep need before them.

Frame evaluation questions carefully:

1. What did they like about their experience?
2. What would they consider doing differently next time?
3. What difference in their spiritual development has this trip made in their lives?
4. What changes in others' lives did they see first-hand?
5. Why would they recommend others participate in future projects?

Close in prayer, praying not just for safety traveling home, but for the lives that were changed during the project.

FIRST STEPS CHECKLIST:



Identify at least five Missouri Baptist relationships, asking key leaders if they will continue to relate to, support, and even partner with you for three years or more.



As a beginning, identify 100 individuals for your prayer team. Begin to develop a plan to stay in consistent two-way communication. Be creative and committed!



Collect important information about your five church partners:

- Church Name and Address
- Contact person and Email Address



Develop an initial plan for developing your church relationships:

- How will you communicate with them?
- How might each church join in your strategy?
- How will you equip them?

Appreciation goes to D. Ray Davis, IMB, for allowing the MBC to adapt the manual used by field personnel who work with volunteers.

Please direct updates and comments on this manual to:

Mark Snowden
 msnowden@mobaptist.org
www.mobaptist.org/evangelism
 Evangelism/Discipleship Strategies
The Macedonia Project
 Missouri Baptist Convention
 400 East High Street
 Jefferson City, MO 65101