

Global Church Companion Handbook



“You are no longer strangers or foreigners,
but fellow citizens with God’s people
and members of the household of God.”

Ephesians 2.19

Guidelines for Disciples of Christ Regions and United Church of Christ Conferences & Associations in the pursuit of relationships of mutuality with International Partners through Global Ministries

Please share this widely throughout your region, conference or association and refer to it often as you seek to establish or continue in a covenantal relationship with an International Partner and Global Ministries.



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The Building Blocks: Global Mission Vision, Values & Commitments

Our Vision: That all of God's people and creation share in God's abundant life

Both Disciples and UCC are committed through Global Ministries "to receive and share the Good News of Jesus Christ by joining with global and local partners to work for justice, reconciliation and peace."

This mission is embodied through reciprocal relationships with 290 Partner churches and organizations in over 70 countries. You are already in partnership relationship with these global partners by virtue of your affiliation with the United Church of Christ or Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).



Global Ministries Core Values

Presence- Manifesting God's love by living in intentional committed relationships.

Mutuality- Walking in hope with others in God's mission.

Community- Building interdependence and unity among all God's children.

Justice- Living out God's radical love by confronting powers that deny the fullness of life and the integrity of creation.

Peace- Embodying reconciling relationships with God, humanity and creation.

Guiding Principles describe the global mission commitment of Global Ministries:

1. Within the covenantal bonds with partner churches and ecumenical bodies throughout the world, **we commit ourselves in Christ to share life, resources and needs.**
2. As part of the ecumenical church and in response to particular historical and geographical contexts, **we affirm our commitment to share persons in mission.**
3. We commit ourselves to discovering and sharing existing and new ways to sing the song of faith...**hearing, telling, and participating in the story of God's love in Jesus Christ.**
4. Relying upon God's grace, we commit ourselves to share in **God's healing of God's continuing creation.**
5. Recognizing the freedom of God's spirit to act in diverse ways, we commit ourselves to **engage in dialogue, witness and common cause with people of other faiths and movements** with whom we share a vision of peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

In 2009, both Disciples and UCC passed resolutions at General Assembly and General Synod concerning our denominations commitment to being a *Global Mission Church*. The DOC resolution invites Disciples to “claim the church's core identity as a global mission church in all of its expressions, and ... live out this commitment in all current and future mission priorities.” The UCC resolution underscores the importance of the “*Be a Global Mission Church*” initiative, asking all settings of the UCC to pursue the Global Mission Church designation.

A Global Church Partnership provides an excellent opportunity to live into being a **Global Mission Church**. The seven marks of a Global Mission Church provide a framework in a Disciples Region or a UCC Conference/Association to develop a Global Church Companion.

A Global Mission Church...

1. **PRAYS** regularly for partners, missionaries and the world
2. **EDUCATES** its members about global issues from toddlers to adults
3. **SEEKS JUSTICE** for the “least of these” in the international community
4. **RECEIVES** the gifts of the global church
5. **GIVES** to the work of global mission
6. **SENDS** its members into the world to share the Good News
7. **GROWS** in sharing the story of God’s mission with others

All of the above global mission understandings and commitments are the building blocks for a vital, healthy, mutual relationship within the framework of a Global Church Companion.

Questions:

- *What do you think is the most important global mission commitment?*
- *How do you understand “Partnership” or “Mutuality”?*
- *What is an experience of your church in Accompaniment?*
- *What global mission has your church done before?*
- *How has your Disciples Region, UCC Conference or local congregation been involved in Global Ministries?*
- *How can your relationship with a current or future Global Church Companion be enriched by these seven marks of a Global Mission Church?*

Defining a Global Church Companion

A Global Church Companion is a covenantal relationship between three parties: a Disciples Region and/or a UCC Conference/Association, Global Ministries and an International Partner.

This three-pronged relationship is defined in a document jointly written by all three parties and called a Covenant Agreement. In this document, the parameters and protocols of the relationship are clearly stated based upon the input of each participant. Emphasis is placed upon a reciprocal relationship where each party has gifts to share and receive.



Some Examples of Companion Goals

- We seek to experience the unity of Christ across cultural, racial, and national boundaries.
- Learn from each other about the spiritual, mental and physical needs of our members, Grow together in our faithful response to our call to witness and ministry.
- Seek to grow from cultural isolation to an understanding of people in other lands.
- Deepen the spiritually transformative impact of the Companion relationship.
- Spiritual Discipline-to purge ourselves of the notion that our global relationships are all about “wealthy-us” giving money to “poor-them.”

The purpose of this relationship is to expand the ecumenical and missionary horizons of our local churches and to learn reciprocally from each other’s faith.

Questions:

- *How does this definition of a Global Church Companion correspond with your current thinking about global relationships? How is it different?*
- *In defining a Global Church Companion what insures that the relationship is reciprocal among equals?*
- *What goals are similar to the Global Church Companion you currently have or envision?*
- *What goals would you like to add to this list?*

Steps in Developing a Global Church Companion

1. Contact Global Ministries:

The first step in the process is to contact Global Ministries to indicate your interest in developing a Global Church Companion.

Contact the following people

For an initial conversation:

Krista Johnson Weicksel

Email: kmjohnson@dom.disciples.org

Phone: 317.713.2566



2. Establish a Companion Committee:

A group representing your UCC Conference/Association or Disciples Region/Area will need to prepare documents, make and recommend decisions and implement the relationship. The relationship should not become the exclusive project of the committee. It is important to have intentional efforts made from the start to involve the congregation.

Region/Area will need to prepare documents, make and recommend decisions and implement the relationship. The relationship should not become the exclusive project of the committee. It is important to have intentional efforts made from the start to involve the congregation.

3. Prepare a Companion Proposal:

The following documents will be needed:

a. Theological Statement (1 page):

Discuss your theological rationale for seeking a relationship. How does your faith and the scriptures shape your understanding walking with someone different from yourselves in another country and culture?

b. Strengths and Weaknesses Statement (1 page):

Identify your needs, weaknesses and vulnerabilities. After that, spend some time identifying your special strengths and how this relationship might benefit your Global Church Companion

c. Profile (1 page):

Describe your Disciples Region/Area or UCC Conference/ Association. Offer information regarding your size, location, mission, special ministries, context, and special meetings

4. Submit a Companion Proposal for Approval:

Upon receiving your completed request and supporting documents, a Global Ministries area executive will write to the International Partner church/organization on your behalf. You will be informed of the decision as soon as the area executive is notified by the Partner

Tip: Request financial assistance for implementing the relationship in a budgeted line item to your church board.

5. Draft an Agreement or Covenant:

Once the Companion proposal is approved, a Global Ministries area executive will help you draft the Companion Agreement. It should be a one-page statement stating the parameters:

a. Parties in the relationship:

The three-pronged relationship should be clearly highlighted.

b. Length of the relationship:

Whatever timeframe is agreed on, it is important that this date be respected, allow each partner to evaluate the relationship and move into other relationships.

c. Theological purpose:

Emphasize that the role of Companion is first and foremost a commitment of faith. Use language from all three parties.

d. Companion Goals and Strategies:

Establish goals. List specific strategies for accomplishing them with timeframes.

e. Financial obligations:

All projects and programs will be decided upon by mutual agreement by all parties involved in the Companionship. Approved Global Ministries projects are posted on the Global Ministries website. New projects by International Partners will need to follow the approval process through the Global Ministries area offices. All financial contributions should be sent through the Global Ministries Office of Resource Development or the Global Ministries Office of Financial Development with the designation specified.

Implementing the Agreement:

We recommend in early stage there be an exchange of delegations. The Global Ministries People-to-People Pilgrimages office will help you prepare. Focus on building relationships.

Keep Global Ministries informed:

Copy the area executive on e-mail correspondence. Provide periodic updates/reports and stories of lives touched through the relationship.

Schedule Periodic Companion Reviews and Evaluations:

Periodically review your agreement. Plan an intermediate evaluation and an evaluation at the end of the designated time in the companion agreement.

What have we given and received from one another?

Where is Christ's presence evident to us?

What do we see as next steps to this relationship?

Does the Companion agreement need to be modified?

Ideas for Action...

A Global Mission Church PRAYS

One of the first steps in living out any Global Church Companion is determining how we can pray for one another. Congregations develop a spiritual bond with the International Partners in weekly worship and in the everyday life of the faith community.

Exchange Prayer Lists:

- Invite your companion to pray for your Region/Conference. Send a prayer list. Ask your International Partner for a prayer list.



Be Intentional in Prayer:

- Pray for your Global Church Companion and the people involved regularly.
- Use the Weekly Prayers on the Global Ministries homepage in worship services.
- Pray, and encourage others to pray on issues and concerns in your Companion's country.
- From time to time, share this prayer activity with those for whom prayers are being said, e.g. missionaries, International Partners, political prisoners.

Special Sundays:

- Establish a “Global Companion Sunday” and invite other churches to participate.
- Invite Global Ministries staff to participate in worship.

***World Communion
Sunday World AIDS Day
World Day of Prayer
Week of Christian Unity***



Multi-cultural and Multilingual Liturgy and Song:

- Incorporate international songs, prayers, stories, and liturgies into worship.
- Use the Lord's Prayer and “The Peace of Christ” in the language of your Partner's area.
- Use liturgical items from your Global Companion's region

Ideas for Action...

A Global Mission Church EDUCATES

Helping church members of all ages learn about your partner church is an important step in knowing your Global Church Companion. Try to regularly share information about the culture, people, land, other religions, and our international partner denomination and organizations, and mission personnel in the country of your Companionship.

Keep the relationship visible:

- Decorate bulletin boards: include photos, letters, maps, a flag, and country information.
- Highlight the companionship in bulletin inserts, newsletter articles, and Church web sites.



Sunday school Involvement:

- Learn and play a game from your Companion's country.
- Develop or find a Bible study series on an issue your Companion faces.
- Reflect on the Biblical and theological calls to global solidarity and witness
- Host a Mission Fair - highlight different aspects of life in your Companion's country.
- Utilize the Global Ministries bible studies and VBS curriculums to encourage your congregation to think about mission.

VBS and READY (Children and Youth)

https://www.globalministries.org/resources_youth_and_children

REACH (Adults)

https://www.globalministries.org/reach_for_a_new_understanding_of_mission

Share in Word and Language:

- Learn greetings in the language of your Companion. Use them often.
- Ask folks who travel to your Companion, or who host, to share reflections

Correspond by E-mail or Letter:

- Share with your Companion, e.g. written descriptions and photos of a church service, a funeral, a baptism, a wedding, a day in your culture, your family, your hometown-schools, homes, post office, shops, etc.
- Send letters, photos, newspaper articles ... Share your reflections on current USA events.

Note: Letters may include requests for money or items. Refer these to the Companion committee and Global Ministries, so that all requests are handled appropriately and openly.

Ideas for Action...

A Global Mission Church SEEKS JUSTICE

As you enter into a relationship with a Global Church Companion you will want to have conversations about advocacy issues important to your International Companion. Chose one area, or one issue, related to your partner's country or region and actively initiate advocacy, or respond to requests for advocacy, from the Global Ministries Education and Advocacy staff. Topics to consider might include: the immigration and migration, human trafficking, HIV/AIDS, international debt relief, Middle East peace, extra-judicial killings, climate change and global warming, or violence against women and children in war-torn areas



Learn About Justice Issues:

- Find out what issues Global Ministries Education and Advocacy staff are highlighting by going to: <http://globalministries.org/get-involved/justice-and-advocacy/>
- Refer to the UCC “Public Policy Briefing Book” which highlights information on justice and peace issues facing the USA and the world.
- Make sure you are receiving the weekly Global Ministries e-mail updates which highlight current advocacy and justice issues.
- Join an advocacy network and stay informed!
- Attend “Advocacy Days” in Washington DC each spring.
- Use the reading list at the end of this manual to as resources for Sunday school or church reading groups.

Ideas for Action...

A Global Mission Church RECEIVES

As we are in relationship with someone from another part of the Body of Christ, we come to realize that we need the gifts of that part of Christ's Body. In the context of your relationship with your Global Companion, you will want to consider receiving a visit from a representative of the International Partner church or organization.



The *Mission Co-Worker to the U.S. and Canada Program* is designed to facilitate the itineration of a member of an International Partner church or organization in a Disciples Region or UCC.

The *Mission Co-Worker in Residence Program* helps youth from Partner churches to be involved in Disciples and UCC summer camps.

For more information on these programs contact the Mission Personnel Office in Indianapolis.

Another way to complement and enhance your relationship with your Global Church Companion is through establishing a Mission Co-Worker Relationship with a person serving in your partner country, and then receiving a visit from that missionary when they visit churches in the U.S. and Canada during their home assignment.

Suggestions for Hosting an International Partner:

- Contact the Global Ministries Mission Personnel office to indicate your interest in the *Missionary to the US/Canada Program* or the *Missionary in Residence Program*.
- Set up a group meeting (Association, Area or District) so the Partner can engage with clusters of churches.

Suggestions for Establishing a Mission Co-Worker Relationship:

- Contact the Global Ministries Mission Personnel office.
- When the Mission Relationship is confirmed, establish guidelines -- write your expectations for the relationship. Ask the Mission Co-Worker to share theirs as well.
- If you wish to take a work trip to the Mission Co-Worker's country of service, please contact: People-to-People Pilgrimage Office

Suggestions for Hosting a Mission Co-Worker Visit:

- Have a mission event. Serve a meal typical to the country where the Mission Co-Worker lives. Give ample time for the missionary to share his/her story.
- Invite the Mission Co-Worker to participate in worship services.

Ideas for Action...

A Global Mission Church GIVES

With Global Church Companions, each partner has something to share. Each gives and receives. The gifts given and received by UCC and Disciples congregations have been many over the years. It is important to clearly state the parameters and protocols for financial contributions through Global Ministries to approved programs or projects of International Partners in the Companion agreement or covenant.

The usual protocol is as follows:

- International Partners share their project priorities with their Global Ministries area executive.
- Projects are approved by the area executive and communicated to the Global Ministries Resource Development Office.
- A project profile is written and posted on the Global Ministries website: <http://globalministries.org/give/>
- Any funds for an approved project should be designated as such and sent through the Global Ministries Resource/Financial Development Office (100% of those funds are sent to the International Partner).
- Periodic reports on the progress of projects are given upon request by the Resource Development Office.



Continue Your Regular Mission Giving:

- Strive to tithe to the wider church through DMF and OCWM.
- Participate in Week of Compassion (DOC) or One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC), and include education about the ministry this money provides throughout the year.
- Support the other Special Day offerings promoted by our two denominations.

Identifying Special Giving Projects:

- Identify a giving project from those identified by Global Ministries which will benefit your Global Church Companion, the denomination or the region.
- Consider a range of possibilities: e.g. raising funds to support a feeding scheme; supporting a seminarian; providing travel scholarships for a visit; sponsoring a child, participating in a work trip.
- Work with Global Ministries Resource/Financial Development Office to determine which financial gifts and projects fit into the vision of both your Global Church Companion and Global Ministries.
- Find out what new projects have been prioritized by our International Church Partners and area executives. Many of these are listed on the web at <http://globalministries.org/get-involved/special-giving-opportunities/>

Theology and Impact of Giving and Receiving: *Read and discuss the following reflection*

“When people approach one other with their hands full of gifts for each other, they cannot even shake hands or embrace in greeting, much less exchange their gifts, so long as their hands are full. First they must set these gifts aside in order to greet each other with empty hands. Given our constant struggle against the insidious temptations to incur gratitude and gain influence over others with our gifts, what better place on which to put these gifts when we approach each other than the altar at the foot of the Cross? Once we have each brought our gifts forward to that altar and placed them there as a genuine thank-you offering, we are then able to turn our backs on them and for that moment our hands are empty. We are now free to greet one another as sisters and brothers in Christ, to embrace, to walk and work together in witness and service, to laugh and cry together in joy and sorrow experienced in solidarity - and then to take from that same altar each according to our need. The altar will have purified the gift of the inevitable lingering traces of manipulation and hunger for control. Each sister, each brother, becomes both a giver and a receiver after they have met and embraced one another with empty hands.”

Frederick R. Wilson - Empty Hands

World Council of Churches Geneva, Switzerland, 1982

Relief and Response Gifts:

- When disaster strikes in your Companion's country or region, find out how to receive and distribute emergency information throughout your Conference/Region. Find out the best way to respond with One Great Hour of Sharing, Week of Compassion or a special appeal.

Giving Guidelines for International Travelers:

- Be aware that as a guest in a host church you are the receiver, not the bearer, of gifts. Be open to the many gifts they offer you. Your willingness to receive what they have to offer is the highest compliment you can pay them.
- No matter how great the need may appear to be, do not let the impulse of the moment prompt you to offer assistance. Your visit is not meant to be an occasion for establishing direct financial links between you or your group and a local individual, or congregation.
- Respond courteously without making a financial commitment at any time. Do not promise something you cannot deliver, then or in the future, to get out of a situation.
- Be very careful about selective generosity. A gift to a particular person, group, or congregation can create difficulties for the local church or community leadership. Once you are home, the Global Ministries Resource/Financial Development Office will work cooperatively with the respective area office in channeling any monetary gift you would like to make.

Ideas for Action...

A Global Mission Church SENDS

Exchanges of people are an important aspect of Global Church Companions. When planning a visit to your Partner church, contact the Global Ministries staff in the *People-to-People Pilgrimage Program* office for assistance and ideas. As your relationship with your Global Church Companion develops there might be an opportunity for individuals with certain skill sets and gifts to go and serve in volunteer assignments with your International Partner.



Ideas for People-to-People Pilgrimages:

Exposure Trips: Focus on in-depth cultural, religious and educational experiences.

Theme Trips: Plan a “themed” trip, a medical mission, a pastors’ retreat, or a work trip.

Youth Trips: Youth delegations and exchanges can focus on friendship and learning.

Solidarity Trips: Stand with a church partner in a situation of political turmoil.

Joint Work trips: Global Church Partners meet in a third country and share work projects.

Orientation:

- Plan orientations 6 to 12 months before the trip.
- *People-to-People Guide for Leaders, Guide for Participants* and *Advocacy Guide*: these guides provide tips on planning and undertaking a meaningful international mission trip.
- Take care of logistics, paper work and documents. Collect EVERYTHING in advance.

Pre-Travel Resources for Reading and Research:

- Explore and use a variety of resources. Utilize the People-to-People office.
- Read a common text and discuss as a group. A new Global Ministries resource, *Restoring Dignity, Nourishing Hope: Developing Mutuality in Mission* is a good start.
- Study a book by a missionary or a citizen about your partner’s country.

Trip Practices and Disciplines:

- Include a personal and group reflection/debriefing time each night. Use a prayer book.
- Learn a hymn or song in the language of your partner.
- Upon request, the People-to-People Pilgrimage office can send electronic copies of *Seeing the face of Christ in our global partners: Mission Pilgrimage Journal*.
- Provide time on a daily basis for journaling.
- Growth can take place through sharing. Read passages from your journal to the group.

After the Pilgrimage:

- Share news of the trip, including photos, through newsletters and web pages.
- Send material to Global Ministries so your experiences can be shared to the wider church.

Ideas for Action...

A Global Mission Church GROWS

As you navigate connections with a Global Church Companion there will be opportunities for growth. Seek out ways to engage your Disciples Region/Area, UCC Conference/ Association, or your congregation. Allow your constituency to be transformed through this developing relationship and share your story and the Partner's story with others.



Mission Moments:

- Include regular mission moments, written and spoken, in worship.
- Use the Global Ministries monthly mission bulletin story from our website in worship.
- Share worship through audio tapes, PowerPoints, digital video, and Skype.

Facilitate Advocacy in Your Context:

- Provide resources to individuals and groups.
- Encourage participation and action in your congregation.
- Provide addresses of government officials and sample letters to sign-on.
- Include information and action alerts in your Region/Conference and your congregation's newsletters and web site.

THANK YOU

Global Ministries would like to thank you for your prayerful consideration of a global church companion.

We hope that this handbook has helped you understand the process and ideas for implementing and continuing a relationship with partner churches around the world.

Reading List

This list is just a start! Global Ministries Area Offices can provide a list of reading materials for a general introduction to their Area or for specific countries.

- *Restoring Dignity, Nourishing Hope; Developing Mutuality in Mission* ED. Jonathan Barnes, Ph.D and Peter E. Makari, PhD
- *Mission and Ministry in the Global Church* by Anthony Bellagamba
- *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* by David J. Bosch
- *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* by Arturo Escobar
- *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire
- *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* by Musa W. Dube
- *Experiment in International Living Leaders Manual*, EIL, Brattleboro, VT, 802-257-7751 eil@worldlearning.org
- *Having an Excellent Adventure: A Handbook for Responsible Travel*, Friendship Press, NY, 1992.
- *The Learning Spirit: Lessons from South Africa*, by Ana Gobledale, Chalice Press, 1994.
- *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice: Navigating a Path to Peace* by Daniel G. Groody
- “Beyond Good Intentions: Short-term Mission Trips,” by Paul Jeffrey, Christian Century, Dec. 12, 2001, pages 5-7.
- *Survival Guide for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad*, by Robert Kohl.
- *Cultures and Organizations* by Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede & Michael Minkov
- *Beyond the White Noise: Mission in a Multicultural World*, by Tom Montgomery-Fate, Chalice Press
- *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help, And How to Reverse It* by Robert D. Lupton
- *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We’re in without Going Crazy* by Joanna Marcy
- *Constructing Local Theologies* by Robery J. Schreiter
- *Finding Peace* by Jean Vanier
- “The Cost of Short-term Missions,” by Jo Ann van Engen, The Other Side, Jan. 2000, pages 20-23.
- *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* By Philip Yancey

