



# Missional Partnership Enabling Agreement

## Definition

A North Western Synod Missional Partnership is a Group [The Manual, Section B 1.(1)(b)] of United Reformed local churches and projects committed to a process of exploring and deepening close, intentional following of Jesus and wholehearted participation in God's work of transforming this world into what Jesus called the Kingdom of God. It does this by each church and member being committed to a relationship of sharing lay and ordained ministry, sharing mission activity and supporting each other in pastoral care. A Missional Partnership takes a strategic view of mission in its locality with local people and churches working together, supported by the Synod, to discern how best to be disciples of Jesus and to serve God's mission in their own settings.

## History

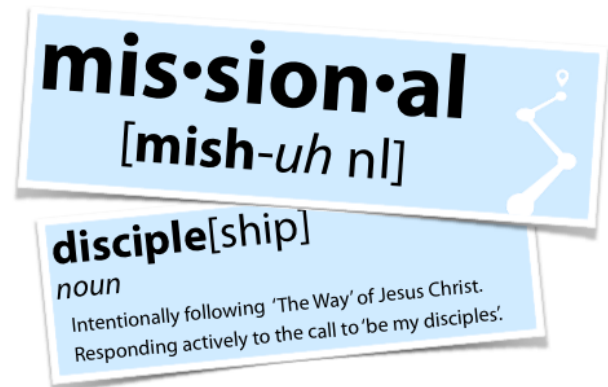
Missional Partnerships were established in 2017 as the Synod expanded its passion for Jesus Shaped Mission with the development of shared local ministry and with the establishment of a resource pool of Mission Mentors alongside other community development and children centred synod staff. Each partnership established a Steering Group and began to explore new relationships and new accountabilities. Commitment to the structure and passion for Missional Partnership purpose have been evident and significant since that time.

This **Enabling Agreement** is a common template as a foundation for each Partnership to define its own commitments and relationships.

## Role

### Generally, to:

- ▶ Discern together the mission focus of the partnership as a whole and sections of it, hearing and discerning direction for new mission focus and activity
- ▶ Discern together how recognised ministries may share skills creatively throughout the partnership, understanding the potential for named links with churches and projects as well as partnership wide skill sharing
- ▶ Discern together how all recognised lay leaders may share skills creatively throughout the partnership, understanding the potential for named contact with churches and projects
- ▶ Foster mutual support for local pastoral care
- ▶ Foster mutual support for local worship and spiritual development
- ▶ Foster mutual support in local administrative duties
- ▶ Foster mutual support for the care and development of buildings



## Specifically to:

- ▶ Maintain an active Steering Group and hold meetings as frequently as the Missional Partnership Steering Group agrees
- ▶ Agree a Vision Statement for the Missional Partnership
- ▶ Agree practical resource sharing of both finance and people
- ▶ Call recognised ministers according to the policies and practice of the United Reformed Church, with the Missional Partnership Steering Group Convenor normally acting as Interim Moderator for the call process
- ▶ By its members, participate in the wider councils of the Synod and General Assembly, nominating members to Synod committees as appropriate and agreed by Synod
- ▶ Refer, through the Missional Partnership Steering Group Convenor, to Synod Pastoral Committee any matter of concern or uncertainty
- ▶ Make decisions according to the Standing Orders of the General Assembly, with the default being Consensus Decision Making



## Steering Group Membership

- ▶ Missional Partnership Steering Group Convenor, appointed by the Synod via Nominations committee and, where practicable, a member from another Missional Partnership
- ▶ One serving Elder or equivalent person from each church or project in the partnership (two, if the churches in the partnership number seven or below), who will be voting members
- ▶ All recognised active URC (United Reformed Church) ministries in the Partnership area including Stipendiary Ministers, non-Stipendiary ministers of all models, Church Related Community Workers, Ministers in Special Category posts, Pioneer Ministers, active retired ministers, Ministers in LEPs (all of whom are in attendance for Steering Group meetings, and are not voting members)
- ▶ One Synod Mission Mentor (in attendance, and not a voting member)



## **Check-list:** for a Discerning Steering Group: *taken from* **Discernment** for **Missional Disciples**

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*Like the very first followers of Jesus, we will ...*

- ▶ Worship together
- ▶ Pray together
- ▶ Explore the scriptures together
- ▶ Eat, and break bread together
- ▶ Share with honesty, and listen deeply to each other
- ▶ Listen to the guiding of the Holy Spirit

*To help us to discern what the Spirit is saying to us, we will ...*

- ▶ Be a safe space for all people to share honestly
- ▶ Be flexible in how we structure meetings, using styles which enable everyone to be heard
- ▶ Be patient and gentle with each other
- ▶ Be accepting of difference and celebrate diversity
- ▶ Model simple and effective ways of reaching consensus in seeking the mind of Christ for our churches

*Sometimes keeping to our principles can feel tough. We also know that ...*

- ▶ At times we may feel frustrated that things are moving too slowly
- ▶ Discerning priorities and the best use of our resources may not mean every church receiving the same
- ▶ We may decide to focus our ministers time in a particular way or a particular place, if this is how the Spirit leads us

*We believe that in listening attentively, we might hear the whisper of God  
in the silence of some and the words of others*