



A SHORT COURSE ON WORLD MISSION

Session Four. Principles of Partnership

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Partnership brainstorm
The Magnificat (NRSV)
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Prayers on Sending Out

Handouts to accompany this session:

Opening hymn
Partnership brainstorm
The Magnificat (both versions)
Prayers on Sending Out

Worship

You may like to join in singing the hymn:

Brother, sister let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may find the grace to
let you be my servant too.

(Richard Gillard © Maranatha Music)

This hymn can be found in *Common Praise: Hymns Ancient & Modern (2000)* No 393; *Hymns Old & New, Complete Anglican Edition (2000)* No 88; *Hymns Old and New, New Anglican Edition (1996)* No 73. Or the words are widely available on the web.

...and /or use the following prayer: POLES APART – TOGETHER IN CHRIST

Voice 1 'Many will come from east and west, from north and south, and sit down at the feast in the kingdom of God.' (Luke 13.29)

Voice 2 Toiling over freezing mountain passes; struggling across trackless deserts; in leaking boats on stormy seas: let them come.

Voice 3 From cathedral and chapel, gurdwara and synafofue, mosque and temple: let them come,

Voice 2 Let them sit and find rest; let them eat and be filled; let them feast and rejoice and let God's kingdom come.

Voice 3 Then shall the wisdom of the east and the insight of the west, the vision of the south and tknowledge of the north all combine;

Voice 2 Then shall the might of the west and the energy of the east, the power of the north and strength of the south unite;

Voice 1 and the world shall know peace and harmony and joy; for God's kingdom has come.

Voice 2 And the nations of the south shall bring their worship;

Voice 3 and the clans of the west shall bring their praise;

Voice 2 and the tongues of the north their songs of gladness;

Voice 3 and the peoples of the east their adoration.

All **O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever.**

Voice 1 'Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those who have been redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the east and the west, from the south and the north.' (Psalm 107.1-3)

All **This is God's promise
This is Christ's purpose
This is our destiny
Alleluia! Amen!**

(From *Shore to Shore: Liturgies, litanies and prayers from around the world*, SPCK/USPG, 2003)

Starting out

Have small groups or pairs each consider one of the following questions, so that between the whole group all the questions are covered:

- Can you brainstorm towards a definition of partnership, including its purpose? (As starting points you might like to think about *'Take your partners for the next dance', the way you were paired off with a partner when walking anywhere in primary school, the use of the term 'partner' for today's quasi-marital relationships.*)
- What partners does your local church have? (these might include the parish, town or county council, churches of other denominations, the arts council, a link parish in another part of the world, the diocese....) Are some of these relationships more of a partnership than others? What marks the relationship as a partnership? How have these partnerships come about?
- What benefits and difficulties might arise from partnerships? (If you're considering the example of church partnerships, you might like to think about benefits and difficulties for the church as a whole, for individuals in the church, for other individuals in the church who are not involved with the partnership, and for the other partner.)

Feedback briefly.

[One dictionary definition is: *A person who is associated with another or others in the carrying on of a business with shared risks and profits.*]

Thinking it through

Why do we need partners?

Fundamental to issues of Christian partnership is our awareness that our God is a God in relationship – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Remember Rublev’s icon from the previous session, where each person of the Trinity is gazing lovingly at another; remember too how the icon shows that we are not excluded from that loving relationship but called into it to become involved in God’s mission.

‘Partnership is an idea essential to the very nature of God,’ says Cathy Ross¹; God models partnership in God’s own being. On earth, Jesus modelled partnership by calling the apostles into relationship with him, to share in his work, and together to continue the work after he was gone. As human individuals, all with particular weaknesses and failings – and particular strengths and skills – it is only through our partnership with God and with others that God’s mission can possibly be achieved.

What characterises a partnership?

- Partnership signifies involvement in something bigger than one person can handle, and partners therefore add to each other.

Though we each reflect God’s image, as individuals we can only hope to reflect a very small part. Each person, each culture and context in which God is enacted, adds to that reflection. It is only when God’s Kingdom is fully realised on earth, with the whole of humanity and all creation in tune with God’s purpose, that God’s entirety will be reflected here. ‘It takes the whole world to know the whole gospel,’² says Max Warren, while ‘Only “together,” not on our own, can we reach his [Christ’s] full stature,’ is how Andrew Walls puts it.³

It’s important to stress that, just as ‘each person of the Trinity has its own divine nature, expressed in relation to the other persons of the Trinity,’⁴ so the distinct identity of each partner in relationship will continue.

The Bishop of London often signs his letters, ‘With thanks for your partnership in the Gospel’, (see Philippians 1:5) recognising that others are working with him as part of the good news. Partners need each other.

- It follows that there is always something to be learned from a partner.

‘None of us can reach Christ’s completeness on our own. We need each other’s vision to correct, enlarge, and focus our own; only together are we complete in Christ.’⁵

¹ Cathy Ross, *The Theology of Partnership*, in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol34, No 3 (July 2010) p146

² *Generally attributed to Max Warren, but source unknown.*

³ Andrew F. Walls, “The Ephesian Moment”, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002) p.76

⁴ Cathy Ross, *op cit.* p146

⁵ Andrew F. Walls, *op cit.* p77

- There is a dynamic to partnership; it is always about a shared purpose (*you can't be partners in a cake, for example, though you could be partners in setting up a cake shop, or seeing how many cakes you can eat.*)

Being partners in the Gospel, means therefore that we are required to *do* something. What do you think this is?

- Partners – even just by their very existence – encourage and motivate each other in working towards the shared purpose, and the skills and characteristics that are brought into play towards that purpose are affirmed and strengthened by their exercise.

A Christian partnership will therefore affirm and strengthen Christian faith and behaviour by their exercise under each other's encouragement in the shared purpose. This is what *koinonia* is all about – the quality of fellowship or community among any Christian group will be reflected in that group's effectiveness in mission.

[You might like to pause to consider this statement in relation to Christian groups or communities known to you.

- An example in the UK is the Anglican Religious Community of All Saints Sisters of the Poor in Oxford, which has pioneered: St John's Home, a residential home for elderly people; Helen House, a hospice offering respite and terminal care and bereavement support for children with life-limiting illness and their families, and Douglas House for the 16-40 age-group; and the Porch, a drop-in refreshment centre for the homeless and unemployed.⁶
- An example overseas would be the Delhi Brotherhood Society, which runs a vocational training centre, a night shelter for street children, a boys' home, a girls' home, an old people's home and day care centre for the elderly, two schools, a childline telephone project, and a project for the empowerment of women.⁷]
- While attributes are affirmed and strengthened simply by their exercise in the shared purpose, the relationship also allows for their deliberate adjustment through learning and reflection as we are enabled to look at ourselves afresh through the eyes of others.

Paul's writings on Christian life and faith did not come out of nowhere; as he visited churches his position as outsider allowed him to bring an objective view of their community. He would then reflect that community back to itself to show up their mistakes, and also reflect on the life of the community in relation to his own experience in order to hone his thinking. It is only through knowing another that we can begin to know ourselves.

⁶ <http://communities.anglicancommunion.org/communities/detail.cfm?ID=2&types=byname>

⁷ www.delhibrotherhoodsociety.org

- For a partnership to be effective, partners need to know each other, and be committed to a deepening relationship.

The Christian faith and behaviour encouraged by a Christian partnership is not only directed outwards from the partnership, but between partners too. The early church that we read about in Acts was marked by a commitment towards openness and trust. We can only know each other through watching and listening, and suspicion is enabled to dissolve as we listen carefully to the experiences of others and begin to be able to look through their eyes. Through listening, we become involved, and over time learn to share responsibility as we seek together to serve the common purpose of the partnership. We learn also to pay its price: 'the acceptance of all the liabilities and limitations that may arise from relating with others whose weakness and sin may injure us, just as for them it involves the acceptance of the liabilities and limitations that follow from our weakness and sin. Mutual forgiveness is the only way forward; without it, any partnership is bound to dissolve or at least fragment.'⁸

Mention should be made here of the **'Continuing Indaba Project'** of the Anglican Communion: 'a journey of conversation to strengthen relationships for mission'.

Indaba is a process for reaching consensus, traditional in many African communities. Its successful use at the Lambeth Conference of 2008 led to the project being set up to develop a process for using Indaba as a means of listening across different cultural contexts and experience, in order to intensify the relational bonds of affection in the Anglican Communion for the purpose of energising local and global mission.

The Archbishop of Canterbury described Indaba as a "meeting for purposeful discussion among equals. Its aim is *not to negotiate a formula that will keep everyone happy but to go to the heart of an issue and find what the true challenges are before seeking God's way forward.*" [my italics.] He compared it to what "Benedictine monks and Quaker Meetings seek to achieve as they listen quietly together to God, in a community where all are committed to a fellowship of love and attention to each other and to the word of God."⁹

Conversations held under the auspices of the Indaba Project will not avoid difficult or controversial issues, but will share perspectives on the Good News, with the stated purpose of supporting each other in mission.

(You can find out more about the Project at:

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/continuingindaba/index.cfm>)

Think about the quality of relationships that are being sought in meetings as described by Archbishop Rowan. How and with whom does your church / do you seek to build such relationships?

What are we partners in?

Hebrews 3:1 'brothers and sisters, holy partners in a heavenly calling' (NRSV)

Hebrews 3:14 'For we have become partners of Christ' (NRSV)

Other versions have 'partakers of Christ' – sharers in Christ. We might also think of ourselves as 'companions of Christ' (The same Greek word – μέτοχος, metochos – is

⁸ Cathy Ross, op cit p 146

⁹ "Archbishop of Canterbury's Pentecost Letter to the Bishops of the Anglican Communion" (12 May 2008), available online: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/1792>, quoted at <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/continuingindaba/about.cfm>

variously translated as 'partner' or 'companion'.) As Christians we partake of Christ when we receive holy communion, and fellow Christians are literally our companions - those with whom we share the bread of the eucharist.

If this companionship (sharing of bread) makes us partners, our shared purpose is in obedience to Christ's sending 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' (John 20:21) and 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). We are partners in God's mission.

God's mission (and therefore our mission) is to the world. There is one mission in the whole world, shared by the worldwide Christian community. In order to reach the world every part of the body of the church is vital. Although local mission is mainly the responsibility of the local church, mission is from everywhere to everywhere. Once, the focus of mission was understood as being the building up of the church, with people being sent from stronger churches to encourage the weaker, from older churches to pass on knowledge and understanding to younger ones. But in fact every part of the church is in partnership in mission to the world; and the church can not fail to be built up through its involvement in mission. The Church is both the means and the end of mission.

This is reflected in the way USPG: Anglicans in World Mission works. By working always and only through the churches of the Communion, relationships between the different provinces and dioceses are strengthened and the capacity of the church to serve in mission to local communities around the world is increased.

Who are our partners?

While it is clear that the whole church is in partnership in God's mission, there will always be particular partnerships that are closer than others, and nowadays these have become visible through the process of setting up 'diocesan companion links'.

Just as, for the Christian, marriage partners are seen as given by God, so our church partners are given to us - 'revealed' or 'discerned' rather than 'chosen' by us. A fruitful partnership offers challenges to both sides and enables both partners to grow in themselves as well as to enlarge the scope of their mission. Growth usually entails pain, even sacrifice: 'I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will be clean and bear more fruit.' (John 15:1-2)

The following model of partnership¹⁰, drawn from the successful partnership between Paul and the Philippians, offers helpful questions to be asked on entering a partnership, to ensure that the partnership will be fruitful.

Principles of Partnership – the Philippian Model

1. Partners have a common purpose

A partnership depends upon a clear, common task in which all partners can be involved. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: what is the purpose of the partnership? Are the parties involved able to play their role in achieving the goal?

¹⁰ For this and for much of the material in this chapter we are indebted to the Revd Canon Phil Groves for permission to make extensive use of his *Global Partnership for Local Mission*, Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge 2006 [Grove Booklet No 106], and *A Model for Partnership*, PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2009.

2. Partners are of equal status

In a partnership both partners must have equality of status. There must be mutual respect. Partnership cannot work where there are feelings of inferiority or superiority on either side. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: are all ready to forego feelings of superiority? Do all have confidence to know they are as important as those with whom they are in partnership?

3. Partners have a common basis of belief

Absolute theological parity is not a requisite for partnership, but a common basis of belief and a shared theological language within which to discuss our relationship in partnership is of vital importance. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: do all have a basis of shared values and beliefs? Do all have a shared theological language with which to discuss both unity and diversity?

4. Partners have a concern for unity in one another's community

Partnership between two groups depends upon each group being united. Unity is forged by humility. Without unity the partnership will be between parties within one or both of the groups, and will encourage division. It is the responsibility of each partner to encourage unity in the other, and, when appropriate, to offer services of reconciliation and not judgement. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: is each partner prepared to seek the way of humility to unity? Are all committed to unity within their partner community?

5. Partners are eager to communicate and to be with one another

Partners will seek ways to be in communication, using whatever means are available, but never neglecting personal visits. The purpose of the visits is for mutual encouragement and to discover how the partnership is proceeding. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: is each community able to put in the resources of finance, time, and effort into visiting their partners and welcoming them into their homes and churches? Are all prepared to maintain the links by using all forms of communication available?

6. Partners share complementary resources and skills

Partners will have complementary gifts and resources to share. Money will often be part of this, but money cannot dominate the relationship. Other gifts are required from both parties. The richer party must be prepared to offer more than money and neither side can take power over the other by the giving of gifts. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: how can money be placed in its correct context? How are the riches of the variety of gifts of all to be shared?

7. Partners share in one another's struggles and victories

Partners will be prepared to share in liability and rejoice in one another's success. Partnership requires commitment that may, at times, lead to suffering in solidarity. It requires the ability to rejoice in the partner's success. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: is each prepared to share in the suffering of the other? Are all prepared to share delight in victories?

What are the pitfalls to beware of?

- The role of money....

In the secular world, money represents power. Vast differentials in financial circumstances between different parts of the world church make it very easy for partnerships to be distorted by the flow of money from one partner to another. Those in the richer situation can feel good about sending help in the form of money and begin to dictate how the money should be used under the guise of accountability, and those in the poorer setting begin to feel helpless and patronised. (Some call this the new colonialism.) Think about the role money plays in your other relationships, and how you manage (or don't manage) to avoid the awkwardness it can introduce. Be aware too that there are big cultural differences in the ways that people relate to and deal with money; David Maranz has identified as many as 90 such differences between the West and Africa.¹¹

- ... and other resources

'Money, resources, education, land, technology, ownership, and power may be unfairly distributed and may lead to distorted exchanges. But what else are we seeking to share? Stories, traditions, ancient knowledge and customs, inheritances, joy, kindness, goodness, beauty, sustainability, difference – these too are to be shared and can restore a balance where there may be uneven power dynamics.'¹²

- Allowing differences to have a greater importance than our common ground

Partnership is not possible if no common ground is shared. This will need exploring and occupying together in order to build up the confidence that will enable difference to be explored and acknowledged with respect, without risk of the partnership being destroyed. For this reason, the daily Bible studies at the Lambeth Conference in 2008 were undertaken in the same groups as the Indaba sessions. On a personal level, think about the friendships you have – particularly with those who hold different beliefs (religious, political, cultural, social) to yourself. How do these relationships manage to survive?

- An attitude of 'knowing'

For whatever reason, whether because ours is the mother church of the Anglican Communion or because we have the advantage of high standards of education, there is a risk of us entering into cross-cultural partnerships with the assumption that we *know* about Christian living and what it *should* be. We may know about it *to some extent* and *within our own cultural context*. There is always more to learn, and there is always more to be revealed to us. Think again about Paul – how, as a later convert (and one responsible earlier for the persecution of Christians), he was still able to teach members of the original twelve. (See, for example, Galatians 2:11-14)

Focusing on this example, Andrew Walls elaborates on how this illustrates that Christian lifestyle is not the preserve of any one culture, but can be translated (rather than exported) from one to another. 'Each Christian lifestyle [Jew vs Gentile/Hellenistic] representing a culture converted to Christ, expressed something that the whole body

¹¹ David Maranz, *African Friends and Money Matters*, SIL International (Dallas) 2001.

¹² Cathy Ross, *op cit*, p148

needed. Hellenistic Christianity was not a Torahless soft option for benighted heathen who could do no better, as some Jerusalem believers undoubtedly thought it. Nor was Judaic Christianity a system of legalistic bondage for people who have never known the benefits of a cosmopolitan culture, as some Hellenistic believers may have thought it. Nor was it the case that each was an authentic form of Christian faith complete and valid in itself, apart from the other. Each was necessary to the other, each was necessary to complete and correct the other; for each was an expression of Christ under certain specific conditions, and Christ is humanity completed.¹³

'What attitudes do we exhibit when we enter into a partnership?' asks Cathy Ross. 'Do we adopt a crusading mind and teacher mentality, or are we disciples and partners with crucified minds, giving up our rights, manifesting the courage to be weak – living the paradox of a crucified, almighty God?'¹⁴

- Allowing the 'partnership' to be the preserve of a few activists

This is likely to lead to division and disunity amongst your own party, as the few activists move forward as a result of listening to and learning from the partner. How can you work to engage the interest of the whole church?* Share examples of what has – and hasn't – worked in your experience.

- History:

The influence of the past is an important factor to be considered in any cross-cultural encounter, having a potentially very serious impact on the development of partnerships. Past experiences have a big influence on prevailing attitudes, both within the individual and societies as a whole; we all have our prejudices. In particular, we need to at least admit the possibility that attitudes to former colonial territories can still retain the moulding imposed by stories we (or our parents) read as children or films we saw later: perhaps the group can come up with some examples? Those visiting the UK from some of the more isolated former colonies can be surprised by the extent of social disadvantage in the 'mother country,' the 'dread and envy of all nations' that flourishes 'great and free'¹⁵ with a lingering image of streets paved with gold, a system of government that is above criticism and unlimited opportunities for self-advancement.

- Ignorance of cultural difference

While we may all these days be aware that cultural difference exists, there is a tendency to assume that its presence is always obvious. A simple example can be seen in our expectation that what we consider a question entirely open to being answered positively or negatively will always be answered in the same spirit, whereas cultural conditioning may require it to be answered in the affirmative come what may. Many cultural differences only become properly apparent through living together over a considerable period.

¹³ Andrew Walls, op cit p 78

¹⁴ Cathy Ross, op cit p147

¹⁵ *Rule Britannia*

* *If you are one of very few in your congregation excited by the wider Anglican Communion, you may like to consider running a USPG 'Cruise of the World Church' – a social event designed to stimulate interest. Ask for a leaflet.*

What about the Bible?¹⁶

Look together at the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) - Mary's song in response to the news that she is to become God's partner in his saving purpose, by bearing his son. Her inspiration is the Song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, in which she gives thanks for the birth of her long-wanted child. God's partnership did not extend only to Mary, but involves each one of us that is willing to embark on the adventure of mission.

Encourage members of the group to share anything that strikes them as interesting, note-worthy or significant. For example:

- In the first part of the Magnificat Mary focuses on God's gracious action towards her; in the second part, she widens her focus to look at God's overturning of the world order – his regard for one lowly woman is expanded into his regard for the lowly of the world.
- God has broken in on the normal workings of the world to bring about his purpose.
- The use of the past tense. This is a prophetic tradition, denoting utter confidence in the future actions of God; God's action towards Mary in the present gives her total assurance that he will act similarly towards the world in the future – such assurance that she can talk of these things as already having been accomplished.
- It is God who will change the world order and bring in his kingdom – not the strivings of humanity.

Mary's Song may hark back to that of Hannah, but it also looks forward; when Jesus makes his visit to the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16), the reading that he makes from the book of Isaiah continues the theme of the Magnificat, of a changed world order. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Now read the second version of the Magnificat given here, and invite people to comment on the differences they notice.

God does not leave us with lives that are 'shattered' but offers us 'more than we can hope for or ask'. To be shattered can be a prelude to the possibility of being remade. The idea of being 'poor before God does not refer to economical disadvantage. Rather it describes those who recognise their total dependence on God and the fact that anything of any worth that they possess comes from him. Jesus reminds us that such poor are blessed. (Matt 5:3)

Mary sings of the God-given ability to become free, to burst through boundaries. Yet she had to watch her son die an agonising death. Do you think if the angel had told her this as well that Mary's response would have been different? (You might consider the famous prayer of Dirk Hammarskjöld, Secretary General of the United Nations (1953-61), 'For all that has been, thanks; for all that will be, yes.')

Have there been things in your own life that were painful, but resulted in the 'bursting of boundaries'? Mary remained faithful to God and was listed among the believers (Acts 1:14) after Jesus' resurrection.

¹⁶ This material draws heavily on *Let's Be Revolting; A Study of the Magnificat*, compiled by Stuart Burgess and Ann Bird, Methodist Publishing House, 1999, and we are grateful to Dr Burgess for his permission to use it.

People who seem to be hedged around by the most daunting boundaries so often seem to be most able to transcend those boundaries and show the way forward for the rest of us. Many in this world who appear to be most bound – for example, by abject poverty, or disability, are in the most profound sense the most free. Share some examples, either of individuals or communities where this is true.

To trust God is an act of faith – involving loss and risk. Mary risked possible rejection by Joseph when she replied to God's messenger, 'let it be with me according to your word'. Trust does not come easily, particularly in ongoing periods of difficulty in life - when we don't understand what is going on, when we are disillusioned, or when we can't see the way forward or how things are going to turn out. But God's generosity is such that whatever life holds for us, he promises to give us 'more than we can hope for or ask.'

Partnership also involves faith and risk. It is often much easier to work on our own, tread our own known paths and go at our own pace, rather than risk being taken out of our comfort zone. On the other hand, what do we learn by doing this? The rewards are so much greater if we work together – for ourselves as well as for those on the receiving ends of our efforts.

This song of Mary's describes the risk, the challenge, the depth, the excitement of our common purpose as we share in partnership with God and with each other. This is what we are partners *in* and *for* - feel it!

- Read the second version of the Magnificat again, changing 'me' and 'my' to 'us' and 'our' – what possibilities do you feel opening up for your church life?
- Look at both versions, and consider the new world order that God is bringing in. To what extent do you think it is dependent on relationship?
- What are the things that keep you as a church (or as an individual) captive? (Think about systems, structures, relationships as well as concrete objects...) How can being in partnership help you reach towards release?

In practical terms...

From crisis intervention to capacity building

The Revd Canon Edgar Ruddock, USPG's Senior Manager 'Growing the Church', explains how USPG works.

On a good dry day in summer you might just see me cruising along the streets of London on my commuter-scooter.

It's great on the flat; but on the uphill, my height and weight work against me – until that magic tipping point at the top when, after all the effort, suddenly I am off and away, flying downhill, the wind in my face, and other pedestrians diving to left and right.

For many people around the world, life is one big uphill struggle. Poverty, political and economic oppression, and lack of education all act as drag-factors on any community trying to improve its lot. They hear all about resources available 'out there', but through no fault of their own they just do not have the capacity to access the money, skills or opportunities that can make the difference between life and death.

USPG has for generations been seen by some parts of the world church as that distant, caring wealthy organisation that will bail them out when the going gets really tough. Our international desk and programme officers still get requests almost every week to 'help us out' of a crisis. But, for a good number of years now, USPG has tried very hard to move its support away from crisis intervention, to development and growth.

Through its new funding mechanisms, USPG is working closely with our overseas church partners, listening to their strategic needs, then finding ways to help them pass the 'tipping point' so that, in future, they can address those needs themselves. Increasingly that means putting the emphasis on education, leadership formation, skills training and investment in the use of land to produce local income and employment, and self-sustaining community programmes.

'Capacity building' means equipping people to pass the tipping point through using their own skills and energy, giving them a forward momentum of their own. This kind of process goes to the heart of mission. Throughout the world, USPG is offering solidarity, prayer, personnel and financial support to enable local Anglican Churches to make a long-term difference.

USPG uses three words to hold up against all that we do with our partners: we want every partnership and every shared programme to be *strategic* – ie for the long-term; to be *transformational* – to enable things to be done differently after this intervention; and to be *relational* – to be both truly local and truly part of the global mission of God, which summons us all to shared living and loving.

Points to consider:

- Canon Edgar Ruddock talks of 'USPG's partners'. In the light of what you have been thinking about in this session, do you think the partnership is between USPG and the churches around the world; does USPG facilitate a partnership between the Churches of the UK (where it gets its funding) and the churches around the world; or is it a mixture of these?
- How do you think the partnerships outlined above measure up against the principles outlined earlier in this session?
- What value can you see for yourself and/or your church of supporting / getting involved with a mission agency like USPG? And how does that differ or equate with supporting / getting involved with your diocesan companion link?

Sending out

As a church - whether as Province, Diocese or Parish - what do you see as the gifts we can offer, and what do we need to receive?

In what ways do our partnerships fall short of God's new world order, and how might we begin to bring them more into line with his abundant economy?

Commissioning prayer:

O God, whose word is fruitless
when the mighty are not put down,
the humble remain humiliated,
the hungry are not filled,
and the rich are:

make good your word,
and begin with us.

Open our hearts and unblock our ears
to hear the voices of the poor
and share their struggle;
and send us away empty with longing
for your promises to come true
in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Janet Morley
Bread of Tomorrow,
SPCK & Christian Aid, 1992

A Covenant with God

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.

Methodist Covenant prayer.

You might like to close by sharing the grace.