

## **Heart to Honduras Sister Church Partnership Covenant Agreement**

### **Covenant Expectations of Heart to Honduras (HtH) to our Sister Church Partners**

1. We will pray for you consistently and intentionally – your leaders & congregation, your mission, your community
2. We will communicate with you consistently and intentionally, keeping you well-informed about current HtH news and events; receive and share communication from your Honduran Sister Church
3. We will cultivate authentic, invested relationships with your key leaders
4. We will provide you with transparency and accountability in all areas of our work and ministry
5. We will visit you (one or more of our Staff) annually for relationship-building, consultation, and/or training unique to your expressed needs in areas such as Leadership Development, Community Development, Short-term Missions
6. We will shepherd your relationship with your Honduran Sister Church/community by facilitating communication, trip planning and execution, financial disbursements, and initiative execution
7. We will provide resources and training opportunities around the nature of our shared work

### **Covenant Expectations of our Sister Church Partners to Heart to Honduras**

#### **1. Training Commitments:**

Heart to Honduras is committed to providing training and re-tooling for our North American (NA) partners on the core values and major foci of our work and ministry in Honduras, as well as cross-cultural education, and training around our team ministry and processes. We will offer these resources in a variety of ways, including but not limited to events/gatherings, online resources, print materials, and videos. We ask you to make every effort to avail yourselves of these resources, with an intentional commitment to learn and grow with us. We ask that you encourage your key leaders (pastors, staff, team leaders), missions team/committee members, and persons from your congregation who participate in missions to engage these resources as we make them available.

We also ask that all your traveling teams prepare well for their short-term missions experiences. We leave the design of that preparation to you, but we do strongly encourage that your teams engage the very helpful resource *Helping Without Hurting in Short-term Missions* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (Moody Publishers, 2014). It comes as a leader's guide, participant's guide, and small group study resource. The book refers the readers to excellent videos, produced by the Chalmers Center, which augment the text. <https://www.chalmers.org/media>

#### **2. Spiritual Commitments:**

We expect you to pray regularly with and for your Honduran Sister Church pastor, congregation, and community; seeking to grow together in the Lord through prayer, communication, and time spent together. Our prayer and strong desire is that you view your Sister Church partnership in all its aspects as a vehicle for disciple-making in your congregation and in the lives of the people in

your Honduran community. We expect you to be intentional about weaving spiritual formation into all of your endeavors in this partnership.

### **3. Relationship Commitments:**

This Sister Church partnership is a “three-legged stool,” including, the NA church, and the Honduran church and community. Note that by entering into this relationship with HtH, you are also relating to our Honduran sister organization, Corazon Para Honduras (CPH). The CPH Staff work with our networks of Honduran churches/communities in a variety of ways, and the CPH Staff will receive and support your teams that travel to Honduras.

The NA church should continually work to create and maintain a meaningful relationship with their Honduran Sister Church. This work should focus more on building relationships than just building “bricks and mortar.” We ask the NA Church to relate to their Honduran Sister Church as equal partners in ministry, seeking to reduce and eliminate paternalism in all its forms and functions.

The NA congregation will work through Heart to Honduras for all their trips and ministry activities with the Honduran congregation. Please do not make your own in-country logistical arrangements or plans directly with your Honduran Sister.

The NA church recognizes that Heart to Honduras has a significant history and presence in Honduras. We respectfully ask the NA church to follow the counsel and direction given by Heart to Honduras in how best to relate to their Honduran Sister. At times, issues may arise within the Honduran congregation or with the pastor. In these instances the NA church will follow the lead of the CPH leadership and HtH Staff. This Sister Church relationship is first with HtH, then the Honduran pastor, church, and local community.

### **4. Travel Commitments:**

We ask each NA church, as a minimum, to visit your Sister Church annually for fellowship, relationship cultivation, accountability, visioning, planning, and joint initiatives. This visit can involve a small group or designated individual, if a mission team(s) is not traveling that particular year.

We also ask that you regularly undertake Planning/Visioning trips. These trips should focus on relationship building and learning about the dreams, assets, hopes and plans of the Honduran church. From this joint conversation, plans can be made for future endeavors together. This Planning/Visioning emphasis may be included in a regular Ministry Team trip, or it can be its own unique trip.

### **5. Communication Commitments:**

The NA congregation will communicate at least monthly with their Honduran Sister Church. This communication should include prayer requests, praises, activities and other details that will help the church in Honduras better understand and know their NA Sister Church. We encourage this communication to go through the Heart to Honduras office for translation, clarification and to avoid possible confusion. Additionally, shared communication helps us all stay informed and on the same page.

Most Honduran leaders and congregational members have Facebook, Skype, email and phones, which they use to communicate with their Sister Church. We encourage you to stay connected via these means. You may face language barriers and other issues, however that can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. Bring any question or concern to the attention of the appropriate HtH Staff member for help in clarifying or answering questions. Please remember that any discussion about financial support, trip or project planning needs to be discussed **FIRST** through the HtH office.

## **6. Financial Commitments:**

The NA congregation is asked to commit to **regular financial support to the HtH general fund** as they partner with their Honduran church. HtH is the agent to initiate and make possible this partnership and considerable effort and expenses are invested for this endeavor. Some NA churches will match what is given to their Honduran Sister Church while others do much more and some less. While there is no set amount required, the financial commitment to the HtH general fund, as well as to the Sister Church is vital for this ongoing partnership.

In addition, the NA congregation will **provide support for the Honduran pastor fund in the amount of \$150.00 per month**. From this fund, \$135 is provided monthly to your Sister Church pastor as an offering toward his/her personal living expenses. The other \$15 will go toward the support of the Honduran pastors in our networks who do not have a Sister Church.

## **7. Community Development Commitments:**

At HtH, we are committed to “Asset-Based Community Development.” We have staff in place who work with the Honduran pastors and community leaders to do resource and needs analyses of their communities and then solicit initiatives based on that collaborative work. We insist that the NA churches allow the Honduran churches to take the lead on project/initiative development, and that the NA churches honor the process by choosing to engage initiatives that are formally solicited by your Honduran Sister Church/community. If your Sister Church/community does not have solicited initiatives available when you’re planning a trip, we will partner with you to discern options and plan accordingly. Please do not tell your Sister Church what you think they need or what you would like to do, but allow them to take the lead.

We ask all our NA Sister Church leaders to read and study the very helpful book *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself*; Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert; Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL; 2009, 2012. As mentioned above, we encourage all your traveling teams to read and study together *Helping Without Hurting in Short-term Missions* by Corbett and Fikkert. It comes as a leader’s guide, participant’s guide, and small group study resource.

## **8. Cross-cultural Commitments:**

We expect each partner (North American and Honduran) to learn as much as they can about each other’s culture and seek to understand one another with love and mutual respect. Learning about culture takes time, intentionality, and a relational commitment. We encourage each partner to keep cross-cultural understanding at the forefront, and seek to always be humble learners throughout the course of the relationship. We ask each partner not to impose their own cultural values and norms onto the other partner, but to embrace differences with grace and respect. Each partner

should approach the other with the understanding that particular cultures are neither “right” nor “wrong,” they are simply different. The more you know about the culture of your sister church community and country, the more rich and vibrant the relationship will be!

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth A. Wourms,  
Developer of Formational Relationships  
Heart to Honduras  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
{name and position, Partnering Church/Org}

This Covenant will be reviewed annually by both parties and re-commitments made accordingly.