

# Partnership Proposal

*Crisis Centre  
Ministries*

*Bringing God's grace and healing love  
to people with life-disrupting problems*

# Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1.	<i>Background .....</i>	3
1.2.	<i>This Document.....</i>	3
1.3.	<i>The Need.....</i>	3
<b>2.</b>	<b>Assumptions .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1.	<i>One Body.....</i>	4
2.2.	<i>Distinct Roles .....</i>	4
2.3.	<i>Biblical Truth .....</i>	4
<b>3.</b>	<b>Strategy.....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1.	<i>Freedom to Engage in Practical Work .....</i>	5
3.2.	<i>Freedom to Fail.....</i>	5
<b>4.</b>	<b>Priorities.....</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1.	<i>Biblical .....</i>	5
4.2.	<i>Practical.....</i>	6
<b>5.</b>	<b>Structure .....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1.	<i>Mission .....</i>	6
5.2.	<i>Social Action .....</i>	6
5.3.	<i>Training and Education .....</i>	6
<b>6.</b>	<b>Practical Details .....</b>	<b>7</b>
6.1.	<i>The Church Link.....</i>	7
6.2.	<i>Coffee Shop .....</i>	7
6.3.	<i>Volunteers.....</i>	7
	<b>Partnership Agreement .....</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. *Background*

We believe that the Church of Jesus Christ must be involved in social action, and that in most cases this is best achieved by churches and other local agencies working together in partnership. These beliefs are briefly described, explained and justified in the document, *BCAN: Working Together*, which is available from the Crisis Centre Ministries office or the BCAN web site (<http://www.bcan.org.uk>).

Once it is accepted that it is a good idea for churches and social action projects to work together, a number of questions naturally follow. How do we work together? What would such an arrangement look like? How could it be established? These are the questions explored in this document.

## 1.2. *This Document*

This document describes a suggestion by Crisis Centre Ministries ('CCM') about how we can work with a few selected local churches in a meaningful partnership that helps both parties fulfil their calling.

The intention of this document is to open up some possibilities for us to talk and pray about, and to describe some possibilities in a concrete enough way for you to gain a good feel for the sort of thing we are expecting. We don't want to tie everything down with lots of paperwork and all the details worked out before we do anything, but we want to do our best to ensure everyone has a reasonable set of expectations up front.

There is a lot of talk about 'partnerships' which seem to be little more than a sales contract when you really look at them. The 'partnership' between a church and an outside organisation often means that the organisation gets to do what it wants to, and the church gets to pay for it. We believe that partnership between Christian groups has got to mean something more than this.

## 1.3. *The Need*

Whether the proposals in this document are followed through and put in to action, or whether some another response is considered appropriate, the context is that the UK as a whole, and Bristol in particular, is facing increasingly urgent and desperate problems.

The structures of our society and the welfare state are more stretched each year; through misfortune, stupidity and malice, more people each year find themselves living on benefits, many of them on the edge – if not the wrong side – of the law.

The problems we come across are getting worse each year. Simply doing more of the same is not going to be enough. Politicians and professional carers do not have the answers. We believe the Church must get involved, because if the Christians opt out of society, we hand it over to the enemy. CCM is responding to one aspect of society's ills, but can only do so effectively if we operate as a part of the Church in

Bristol. Together with the rest of the Body of Christ in Bristol, we need to hear what God has to say to Bristol, and discover how to put it into practice.

## 2. Assumptions

We bring some assumptions with us to the table.

### 2.1. *One Body*

We are each a part of the one Body of Christ. So we need to work together in some way. At the very least, we each need to understand what the other is doing and is called to do, so we do not end up working against each other by mistake. If we understand, we can pray for one another, even if we do nothing else.

### 2.2. *Distinct Roles*

Just as different individuals have different roles to play within a local congregation, so different groups of Christians have different roles to play as part of the wider Body of Christ. The Prophet and the Pastor have different roles, even though they both work towards the same larger purpose. Similarly, local churches, missionary agencies, social action projects and specialist support groups all have a distinct and necessary role to play.

Because we have different roles and different callings, we have different priorities. Just because you are not working to my set of priorities, does not mean that you are wrong – or that I am. These differences can be complementary, and not contradictory. Variety, if handled correctly, can be a source of strength.

### 2.3. *Biblical Truth*

Even Christians get things wrong sometimes, so we need to test our plans and actions. Working in partnership with another person or group does not mean we endorse everything they do, or believe every doctrine they express. But in working alongside Christians who act and believe differently to us, we can test our own understanding of Scripture, and deepen our own insight into God's purposes.

In working alongside others, we will generally be able to support, encourage and endorse what they do (otherwise, it will be a very strained relationship). But we need to be free to say sometimes that while we will pray for them as a fellow child of God, we cannot support what they are trying to do. But even then, we need to disagree in love: a different understanding in some area does not require us to break fellowship.

## 3. Strategy

A local church needs a variety of possible ways for its members to become involved in practical service. If the church is only involved in 'spiritual' activities, the members have a very limited number of options: become a minister, teach in Sunday School, lead a Homegroup. One person can be the treasurer, a few can lead worship, a few can be on the leadership team, and in many cases, that is about it.

### *3.1. Freedom to Engage in Practical Work*

If we affirm that practical care is as important in the Christian life as spiritual activity, we need to offer people concrete possibilities for engaging in this kind of activity.

People grow through doing things, not (in general) by listening to sermons. A key purpose for teaching in the church is to answer the questions the congregation are asking through their involvement in real world activities.

### *3.2. Freedom to Fail*

If we have a strategy for releasing people into their gifts and ministries, this must involve the possibility of encouraging church members to try things out and take risks. Even in the church, many people do not pursue their calling and explore their gifts because they are afraid to fail. There are two key aspects here.

We must teach people that it is okay to try new things and discover we are not very good at them, or that they are not for us after all – for many people, it is only if we do this that we will also find the things we are good at, and the ministries we are called to persevere in.

We must also provide a loving and accepting environment in which people feel emotionally secure, where they won't mind trying new things and risking failure.

CCM is an excellent stepping-stone into other forms of service and Christian ministry: many people who begin by volunteering for us go on to exercise a wide variety of other roles.

## **4. Priorities**

### *4.1. Biblical*

We have two main priorities: to love God, and to love our neighbour. Who is my neighbour? The victim of a mugging I meet on the road.

Social action has always been on the church's agenda. The very first church structure – creating the role of Deacons – was to enable the first social action project to develop successfully.

Jesus cared for practical needs: He fed the hungry and healed the sick. His miracles were a practical demonstration of the Kingdom He preached: words and actions went together. The miracles were not simply evidence to authenticate the message: there were other miracle workers with other messages in His day, and He rejected requests to produce a miracle on demand. He did not levitate people or turn wood into gold; He met real, physical needs because His Father cares for peoples' bodies as well as their souls. After all, He created both.

## 4.2. *Practical*

How the Church engages in social action, the relative priority it is given within the overall programme of the church, and the choice of areas to focus on: these are all difficult questions. But whether the Church should get involved in social action is not difficult.

We do not want to suggest for one moment that CCM is the only valid way for a church to be involved in social action. There are many other possibilities, and the Church as a whole probably needs to be involved in all of them. The rainforest and gorilla and ozone layer all matter, as do issues of world trade and third world debt. But if we fail to make a practical response to the problems of the most needy people on our doorsteps, we can hardly claim to be demonstrating the love of God.

## 5. Structure

### 5.1. *Mission*

In practical terms, we suggest that CCM becomes one of your church's supported missionaries.

In other words, we ask you to pray for us, and do whatever else you would normally do to support one of your missionaries. If you feature the work of each of your missionaries in turn, we are happy to wait for our turn alongside the others. As you would expect for any supported missionary, we will report back to you on what we are doing, and answer your questions about the ministry in the ways that fit your church programs and structure.

One benefit of this approach is that more people may come to realise that 'mission' is not simply about going overseas. Bristol is also a mission field.

### 5.2. *Social Action*

Similarly, we ask that you treat us as one of your social action projects. You encourage your members to get involved with CCM, as you encourage them to get involved with the other projects you support.

### 5.3. *Training and Education*

The volunteers who work for us will receive practical training, as well as the opportunity to make a real difference to peoples' lives. Working alongside others, on the job, is the first and most important way to learn. The primary, and most important thing we do is to accept people as they are, and simply be there for them – and while this is not easy, it requires no specialised skills or knowledge at the outset.

In addition, we provide more structured learning opportunities, where people can learn the basic facts and principles people must grasp if they are to engage effectively with people whose lives are disrupted and chaotic. This training is also available to people who wish to be of practical use to those around them, even if they have no intention of volunteering with us.

We are also happy to offer specific training on request, on the subjects we have some experience and expertise in, such as drugs and alcohol, addiction and mental health issues, as well as the more obviously Christian subjects like evangelism, the pastoral care of needy people, and how to discover an authentically Christian response to complex and emotionally charged problems.

## 6. Practical Details

### 6.1. *The Church Link*

It will probably be helpful if one person can act as the main link between CCM and the church, facilitating communication and representing the culture, needs and priorities of each to the other. Of course, few people will be able to do this well from the outset, but in this area willingness, availability and enthusiasm count for a great deal.

### 6.2. *Coffee Shop*

One possibility is that the church might take responsibility for one session per week in the coffee shop. If this is agreed, it would be something to aim for, as we would not expect (or allow!) inexperienced people to take responsibility for the coffee shop. But the volunteers would work alongside more experienced staff and volunteers for a period of time, and at least one person would be trained to take the responsibilities of a Duty Manager in the shop. Only when you and we are both happy that your people are ready and able to take over responsibility for a session, would this happen.

### 6.3. *Volunteers*

All volunteers would be expected to complete the Volunteer Induction Programme, and, where possible, to undertake the volunteer training we provide. CCM has a set of legal obligations towards our volunteers, and the fact that a volunteer may come from a local church does not relieve us of these responsibilities.

So while we would expect the church Link Person to be active in recruiting volunteers, they will not by-pass the procedures and checks we must have in place.

---

Copyright © 2004 Crisis Centre Ministries

Web site: <http://www.crisis-centre.org.uk>

Total number of pages: 8

Author: Paul Hazelden

Last updated: 00:53 3 March 2004

Location: C:\My Documents\Paul\CCM\Partnership\_Proposal\_c.doc

# Partnership Agreement

between  
Crisis Centre Ministries  
and  
A local church

## Introduction

This partnership agreement is an expression of our shared understanding and desire to work together to see God's Kingdom brought into greater reality in our land. It is not, and does not attempt to be a legal contract, but it does express in concrete terms some of the ways in which we expect our shared beliefs to be worked out.

We are undertaking this:

- because we believe God is calling us to work together more effectively;
- as a practical aid to communication with each other;
- as a prophetic statement of what we believe God wishes to achieve; and
- as an example and an encouragement to others to do something similar.

## The Agreement

Crisis Centre Ministries undertakes to do its work in partnership with the church, to encourage new Christians to become involved in the life of the church, to provide opportunities for church members to share their faith and serve Christ in a variety of practical ways, to provide training and encouragement to church members to help them grow in their Christian faith, and to do all this in a way that respects the particular beliefs and practices of the church.

The church undertakes to work with CCM as one of its missionary partners, to publicise and support the ministry in the same way as for other missionary partners, and to encourage members to be involved with and make use of the opportunities offered by the ministry as appropriate.

We both undertake to keep each other informed about any relevant developments.

## Signatures

Crisis Centre Ministries: ..... Date: .....

The church: ..... Date: .....