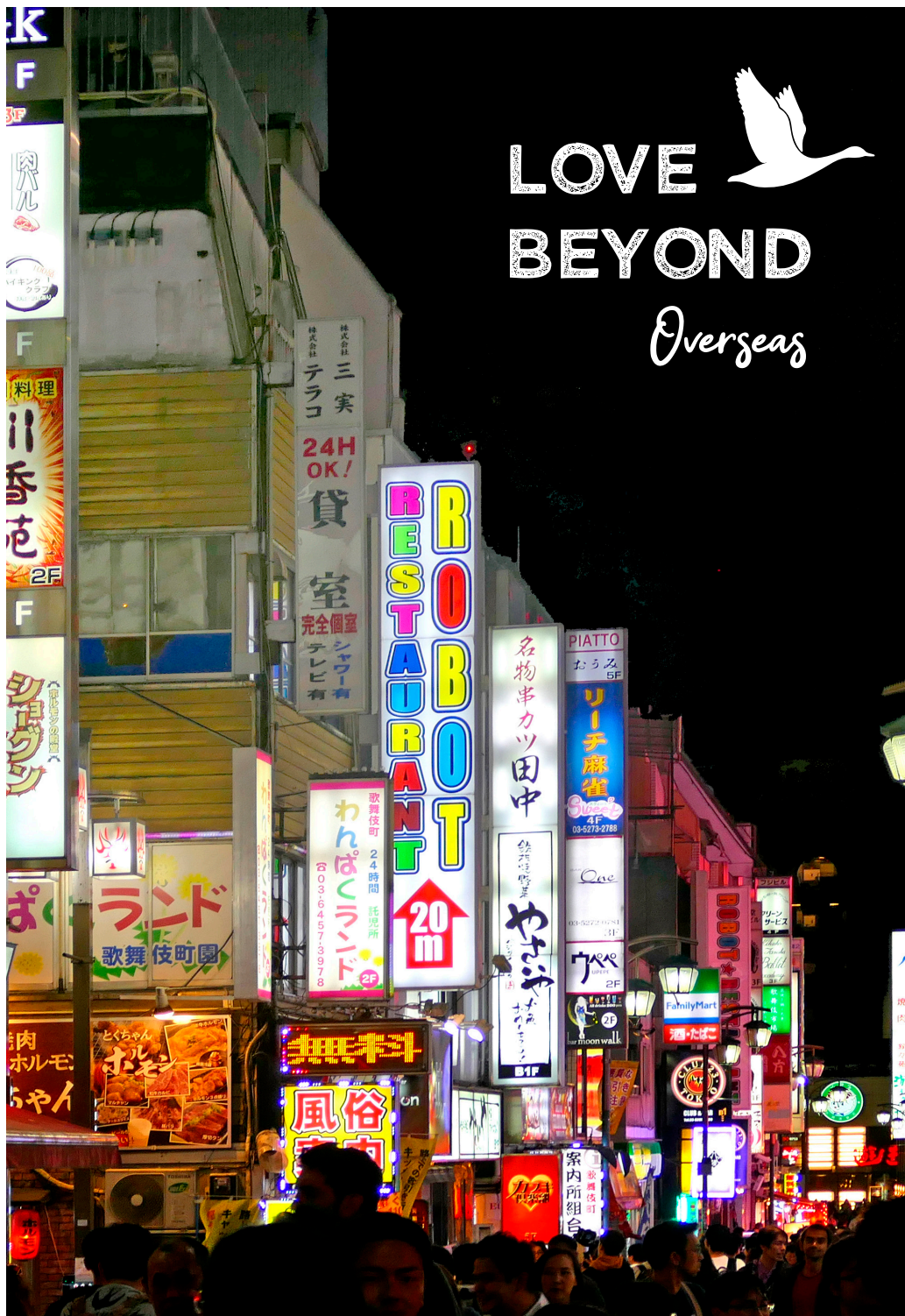


# LOVE BEYOND



Overseas





# A Community of Ministry

Living and working in another country with a foreign culture and a new language presents many challenges. Overseas workers develop a network of support structures and relationships from churches, organisations and friendships. Many members of the *Love Beyond* network are overseas in many different locations across the world. We support them and channel their energy and vision to bring life to our work in the UK and abroad. We would love you to join us.

We aim to plant and grow churches all over the world, to create mission hubs, train workers and send people overseas. To do this, we focus on four distinctives: an adequate theology of the church; a good definition of leadership; an understanding of what training we need to have in place; and a shared practice of mission. The next few pages give a brief summary of these areas.



## THE CHURCH

Church is best understood as a particular sort of shared life. Churches are at their best when they equip people to live that life, and leadership is at its best when it shapes the church towards that end.

The three most important commands of Jesus are: "love one another, as I have loved you" (John 13:34), "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27) and "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). The shared life has three dimensions: community, worship and mission.

Living the shared life can be compressed in cultures or countries where believers are scarce and security is tight. We partner with our workers to manage their unique situations with faith and creativity, seeking to grow reproducing churches which nurture worship, community and mission.

## MISSION

Jesus taught his disciples to go in pairs to proclaim good news without thinking too much about the costs and risks (Luke 9:1-6, 10:1-24). He encouraged them to look for people of peace to partner with in sharing good news. He taught them to be 'fishers of men' (Matt 4:19).







Doing this in our own passport countries can be challenging enough; learning how to do it in another culture requires time, training, knowledge and partnership. To remain overseas for the long term requires committed conversation partners and a community of peers with whom to share and receive wisdom.

As we seek to find people of peace, we need to fish in a flow of people. That flow can be created in a number of ways - usually by being willing to serve. The church formerly used education and healthcare to serve and win a hearing in its overseas mission. Even though this approach can be difficult in closed cultures that are politically sensitive, there are still many other ways to serve, teach and engage socially which can develop our work. We call them **flow projects**.

We need to develop our capacity to create flow. To do this, we identify and cultivate intellectual and social assets and obtain new ones (like language and culture). Next, we raise our ability to deploy them effectively. We become better at being friendly and making relationships. Lastly we grow in our ability to share good news.

We can use a variety of spaces and contexts to do this. Each **flow project** or context in which we work is an expression of our vision to serve and love people, grounded in a plan to meet identified needs. When we run five or six **flow projects** in a similar location we call it a hub. To make these hubs welcoming to outsiders they appear as a cafe, a gallery or a business centre.

Currently nearly twenty **Love Beyond** workers are overseas; their welfare is a high priority for us, and they are currently based in nine locations. They also use the same approach: operating out of three hubs, with plans for five more.

## LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a creation reality that appears everywhere. It is done Christianly when oriented towards Jesus and concerned with developing maturity in the church. We follow a modern theory that we think is coherent with Biblical leadership. It focuses on developing Christian maturity and responsibility by dealing well with anxiety (both our own and that of others).

Edwin Friedman deploys Bowen's Family Systems Theory in a way that many Christians have found useful. Friedman speaks of good leadership as a "non-anxious presence" that avoids getting caught up in the reactivity, emotional herding, blame displacing and quick fixes of anxious members. When we can do this, we are better leaders and can effect lasting change, maintaining long term emotional and mental well-being within a challenging field. Being able to discuss, reflect and learn from Friedman (and each other) as we grow in our practice has been an important part of our shared leadership life.





## TRAINING

The ability to accept evaluation without reactivity is important for all leadership, and particularly trainees. We encourage aspiring overseas workers to consider apprenticing alongside one of our overseas partners, to learn on the job and see first hand if any given location or ministry is where they think God is calling them. The task of submitting to the learning environment, and creating circumstances for others to learn are both important.

Being able to lead in mission is essential - too many define their leadership as preaching and counselling rather than promoting the shared life. Mission is the most neglected aspect, and so all our leaders are trained to be confident in this. We treat leadership as a craft to be learned by doing, rather than a set of ideas to be consumed. Whether it is disciple-making, community building or putting out chairs, we learn by doing it together with others who have done it before.

The aspects described here form the basis of four courses that we teach, using reading, lectures, discussion and action. All have a placement in a *Love Beyond* location, and participate as an apprentice leader.



## MANIFESTO

In working out how to build and sustain relationships in our community of ministry it's important that we're clear about what the network holds dear. Here are a few of our top values:

**A community of ministry** We aspire to provide a context for leadership and ministry development. As such we assume those who partner with us will serve others in the network as well as be served themselves.

**We are relational** We want to see you, hear from you, dream with you, and partner with you. We try to create regular opportunities to connect face to face with our partners in ways that complement our various diverse locations and workloads.

**Journeying together over time** We want to facilitate a network of wisdom and experience in ministry. We want partners to mine the resources of the network when making big decisions and take one another into account when grappling with challenges.

**Planting churches and ministries of the Kingdom** We aspire to live out the life of the church in community, worship and mission and see churches and ministries planted that do the same.

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

If this is no surprise and you're happy with the above values as a framework for our partnership, the next step is establishing a clearer agreement. We would like to identify how *Love Beyond* can work for you in your context.

We all have different needs and preferences depending on many different factors. Some of us on the field appreciate visitors, others don't, some of us want people to track closely with them pastorally, others are cared for in other ways. Rather than creating a 'one size fits all' approach for our overseas workers we'd like to hear how you would like *Love Beyond* to serve you and what you'd be able to offer others.

With that in mind we'd like each of our overseas partners to create a brief Memo of Understanding (MOU) with *Love Beyond* which answer the following questions:

## 1. What do you need which Love Beyond could help with?

Below is a list of the kinds of things that *Love Beyond* hopes to offer; this list is not exhaustive and you may have other needs worth mentioning.

- Pastoral care and oversight
- Prayer support
- Fund raising help
- Opportunities to broaden your network and connect with other churches
- Recruiting other workers to your field
- Professional development/training
- Personal development
- Cross pollination with other workers in other fields
- Furlough needs like housing or transportation when in the UK
- Advice and support with NHS matters and Higher Education in the UK
- Prayer for healing
- Home schooling advice
- Being a first contact community in times of crisis
- Advising on how to get appropriate financial advice
- Theological resources
- Strategy
- Goal setting
- Being part of a bigger vision
- Security

## 2. How would you like to serve other partners in Love Beyond?

Of course most of us have a lot of demands made on our time and are busy and overloaded in our ministries. But we've also found that our overseas partners usually have a huge amount of wisdom and experience to help others and sometimes appreciate the opportunity to share this and serve the community. (We understand that you have constraints on your time and energy and your resources are finite and subject to fluctuation).

Below is a tentative list of the kinds of things other workers could find helpful. You may have some ideas of your own.

- Sharing experience and knowledge with others who are facing problems or difficulties
- Being part of a WhatsApp/Signal prayer group with other *Love Beyond* workers.
- Being available to speak at different *Love Beyond* churches who want to hear more about mission.
- Being willing to share at *Love Beyond* events when (and if) you're back in the summer or at other times.
- Visiting other *Love Beyond* connected workers & families who might be closer to you than they are to the UK.
- Offering advice in setting up businesses on the field or running an NGO.
- Offering Language learning advice or techniques
- Sharing your knowledge of tax, pensions and financial issues facing workers overseas
- Sharing your experience and knowledge of educating your children whilst living overseas







## WHAT NEXT?

First of all, it would be good if you let us know that you are interested in partnering with us. Secondly, we would like to see your response to the two questions above. Send us your thoughts.

We will take a look at what you suggest and get back to you with a first draft MOU. This helps us all create clear expectations. After this, we'll meet with you and work out ways the network can begin to meet your needs and the needs of others.

This is only the best we've thought of so far - as you join in, you can help us shape the future of our connection!

## THEOLOGY

We are Evangelical, Charismatic, and non-Calvinistic; we believe in women in ministry, are traditional about sexual morality; we are scholarly when necessary and favour Anabaptist perspectives on the believer's church and baptism. You would need to be happy with this!

## LANGUAGE

Learning the new language is so important and yet very challenging. Those among us who have acquired multiple languages are here to help.

# LOVE BEYOND

## Basics



## PRAYER

We pray regularly for each other and lift up current needs, focusing on the bigger issues that seem to be blocking progress. Please let us know your discernment for yourselves and others.

## GLOBAL MISSION DAY

We would love you to participate as we raise funds for and honour our Overseas Workers. Bring everyone for the day!

## READING

A number of books have really helped us, and to be able to join in the conversation, you would benefit from reading them.

## HUB DEVELOPMENT

We may be able to help you to develop a hub location like our Living Rooms, where you can run flow projects and engage culturally.

## PLACEMENTS

We may be able to place students with you. Becoming acquainted with the material we teach them will help you to gain the most benefit from them.

## SUPPORT

We would like to help promote your needs and build your support matrix. We can do this by following up any offers of finance, prayer or help.

## CONFERENCE

We get everyone together once a year - we would like you to be a part of it. Cost is by contribution.

## PUBLICITY

If you need help with websites or publicity material, our Media department can help.



## MOU

We will develop a Memorandum of Understanding that helps bring clarity and agreement.

## TIME

Anything based on relationships costs time, and this is the biggest cost to you. We are a community of ministry, and this involves getting to know each other, which costs time.

## FESTIVAL

*Beyond* is an annual Christian arts and teaching event we want to develop in St Albans on the last bank holiday in May each year - join us!

## REVIEW

We want to help you reflect on your current practice and set new goals. We would identify any new resources needed and help you find them.

## COST

LoveBeyond is sponsored by Turn Trust. There are no administration expenses, and no admin costs to join.



FOR FURTHER  
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