



Part 1 - Do you want to become a part of theRIVER?

Do you already have or do you want to create a beautiful space for fellow travellers to explore the teachings of Jesus and join the journey of following Him?

We would love to connect with you and journey alongside you. Please connect with those already connected, come visit us, come explore ideas alongside us. We welcome you.

To become a part of theRIVER, the journey ahead is all about relationship and trust...

Steps:

1. **Self-evaluation** - Decide if you fit / Discover more about theRIVER (read our vision, our values and our beliefs on Part 2 of this document).

2. **Three Reference points** - Have three references within theRIVER.
 1. **Visit a RIVER Community or RIVER Connection**
Learn alongside them, build relationship and share your vision with them.

 2. **Invite a leader of a RIVER Community or RIVER Connection to visit you.**
Invite them to dream with you, and see what your doing in the world.

 3. **Come to a World Gathering of theRIVER**
Our biennial gathering, where all the places connected to theRIVER meet! This is a great, if not *the* best opportunity for you to get really connected.

 4. **Have a Gardener of theRIVER visit you.**
TheRIVER has these helpers, Gardeners, who are flexible to come and visit you and help you get more connected with everyone else.

Note: Gardeners can only serve as one reference, as well as attending Gatherings, while communities and connections could serve as all 3 references - as long as they are from 3 different ones.

3. **Write to us**

Whenever you are ready, please write to: therivercommunities@gmail.com including:

1. Introduction and motivation (including the self-evaluation) and whether you want to apply as a RIVER Community or RIVER Connection (see Part 2 of this document).
2. Your reference points

The Gardeners and Advisors of theRIVER will then go over your application and references. If everyone is in agreement, and believe that you share the vision and values of theRIVER, we will welcome you as a RIVER Community/Connection!

There are three times throughout the year where we announce, celebrate and honour new places, so that everyone may acknowledge your entry:

- 15th of January
- 15th of May
- 15th of September

Please note: After a year of being part of theRIVER, we will have a short evaluation and self-evaluation to make sure our relationship with you and your place is going well!

Part 2 - Our Values

theRIVER is the collection of living connections among the theRIVER Communities and RIVER Connections. It is the exchange of experience, resources and connections with one another in the traveller scene for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus in its widest sense. We are travellers exploring the teachings of Christ together. theRIVER Communities and Connections create space to experience God; everything from guesthouses, cafés, hostels, to meditation spaces. theRIVER connects, supports and inspires communities to grow, work together, and even start new communities. Our vision is that there would be many places on earth where we can explore Jesus' teachings and find out what it means to grow together in following Him. The way of life modelled by Jesus guides all of us.

Vision: theRIVER envisions a traveller scene that is filled with connected places where people can explore Jesus in community.

Mission: To see transformation within the traveller scene, so that it would be common for any traveller to take their next step with Jesus. In other words, pursuing Jesus while travelling made into an easy choice.

The 3 Core Values of Our Communities:

1. We are communities devoted to following Jesus.

Community – Communities within theRIVER have different forms. We believe that community starts at three, however this can express itself in different ways. Some communities have one core person who is committed to the vision, with travellers volunteering regularly. Other communities have multiple people at the core and fewer people coming through, who are less committed to the vision. We welcome anything in between.

Following Jesus – Jesus is the sole reason we dream what we dream and do what we do. We believe He is the image of the invisible God and the pathway to knowing and being in a relationship with Our Creator, the divine presence. For a more detailed description of what we mean when we say we are followers of Jesus, we have a statement of faith. (see underneath)

2. We are immersed in the traveller scene.

Immersed – We are travellers ourselves, seekers of spiritual truth, who recognise that we have lots to learn from others. The spaces we create are a part of the scene in the midst of travellers and not on the fringes. This means our location is in a place where our people come and what we do holistically meets the needs of our traveller friends. Right now, that looks like spaces to stay, to meet, to create and to join, however we are open to new expressions of what this could look like.

Traveller Scene – Our focus is on creating a space for backpackers and long-term travellers. Although, we recognise that there are many types of travellers, our communities are spaces for those who have left their homes, their jobs and their relationships for an extended time to seek a deeper knowledge of themselves and of spirituality.

3. We intentionally create space for ourselves, and fellow travellers to explore the Christ path.

Intentionally explore the Christ Path – We are active in dialoguing with others about their philosophy of thought and about the teachings of Jesus. We create spaces where exploration of spiritual truth is welcomed, and where Christian practice can be experienced.

Note: Matching all three opens the way to become RIVER Community.

Matching simply the second and third means you can become a RIVER Connection.

Statement of Faith

As the RIVER network we hold to a biblical understanding of the Christian faith. The following statements are wholeheartedly accepted by all of the communities that are a part of the RIVER and those who work alongside us.

We believe that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of Old and New Testaments are God's infallible written word, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit. These Scriptures are our supreme authority.

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ is God, the eternal and living Word, who was born into this world through the virgin Mary. Jesus is both fully God and fully human and he lived a sinless life. Jesus died on the cross as our substitute, taking upon himself the punishment which we deserve. By his death, Jesus made a once-for-all atonement for sin. We receive forgiveness of sins by grace through faith. Jesus physically rose from the dead after 3 days, ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. He is the only mediator between people and God and will one day return to the earth in great power and glory to complete God's plan.

We believe that every person is created in the image of God. However all people have rejected God and therefore are spiritually lost and deserve death. Humanity is so lost that we are unable to save ourselves from this deserved judgment or from the power of evil. We need someone to save us.

We believe that salvation is the gift of God to those who turn back to Him and personally believe in Jesus Christ. This salvation is an act of God's love and grace, accomplished through the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross, and by the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit who has come into the world to reveal and bring glory to Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer and enables them to live holy and fruitful lives for the glory of Jesus, despite opposition from the world, the flesh and Satan.

We believe that 'the church' is God's people on earth. We are Christ's body and He is our Head and we therefore gather locally to encourage one another, pray, worship and learn from the Scriptures together. We do all this so that Christ is given more glory in our lives individually and communally.

We believe that depending on people's response to Christ, all people will be either separated from God eternally or they will enjoy eternity with Christ in the new heavens and the new earth.

We believe that Jesus Christ commands His church to love God and love others as themselves. As His church, all believers are to be involved in making disciples of all people in the world, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded. As Jesus is the only way to God, this task must be a driving concern and passion of the church until all people have heard the momentous news of salvation through Jesus Christ.