

The Board of World Mission

Favored Practices



Our favored practices are the values that uphold our work in missions, be that with congregations or local partners. We at the Board of World Mission have found through our experience that mission endeavors that have the following characteristics seem to work well and reduce the number of potential problems. Our mission endeavors are based on: *partnership, spirit and faith, mutuality, network and oversight, and sustainability.*

Partnership

1. BWM sees partnership as a covenantal relationship between one or more persons, who actively embrace and seek to live out a personal desire to love and serve God through a collaborative effort of mutual respect, learning, decision-making, and sharing.
2. We believe that when combined in a unity of Spirit, individual perspectives, personalities, gifts and talents work to strengthen the partnership.
3. We believe that true partnerships are those in which there are neither benefactors nor recipients, rather equals with strengths and needs that enhance the even growth of the relationship.

“I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.”
Romans 1:11-12

Spirit/Faith – centered on Christ and open to others

The BWM encourages that mission endeavors:

1. Are grounded in faith and the desire to serve Christ as the central reason for mission.
2. Begin, continue, and reach maturity through prayer.
3. Understand the endeavor as just one part, connecting with the larger work of Christ today.
4. Are not dependent upon one individual or personality for success.
5. Incorporate persons who:
 - are open to being changed by the experience and to learn from it;
 - are open to others' input, perspectives, constructive criticism, and ways of doing things;
 - believe that all people are equal in the eyes of God, that God provides all people with talents, and that we need each other to be whole;
 - are willing to risk transparency in their approach and attitudes; and
 - are flexible with regard to plans changing and unexpected setbacks.

Mutuality – affirming all voices at the table

The BWM encourages that mission endeavors:

1. Are approached in a partnership in which all parties give and receive.
2. Begin with us listening to others' strengths and needs as they are expressed to us.
3. Develop together goals and strategies consistent with the local culture and using local resources when possible.

“It will only be in that place of respectful dialogue where we begin to find the grace and creativity to meet the challenges we face.”
Mary Lederleitner,
Cross-Cultural Partnerships

4. Work with the understanding that a good approach in our culture is not always a good approach in other cultures, and that our partners are valuable resources in helping us identify what effective, culturally appropriate approaches could be.
5. Address openly the positive and negative aspects of financial support.
6. Are those that have the blessing of both partner churches and judicatory bodies.
7. Include those that recognize that Christian practices and traditions vary from place to place, and do not insist upon “how we do it in our context.”

Network and Oversight – *providing for effective accountability*

The BWM encourages that mission endeavors:

1. Recognize that all resources originate from God for the benefit of all of God’s children, and are entrusted to all of God’s children to steward faithfully.
2. Incorporate a willingness to operate under the oversight of an independent board of sponsoring organization.
3. Share decision-making and responsibility among all partners.
4. Make maintaining good communication and transparent reporting among all partners a high priority.
5. Are very careful and attentive to the methods used with regard to the handling, accounting, receipting, and disbursing of funds among all partners.
6. Are well-organized and don’t rely solely on the participation of one or a select few individuals.

7. Anticipate and make provision for transitions in leadership.
8. Provide clarity to how others can become part of the ministry.
9. Allow for margin for people to make mistakes and to learn.
10. Are willing to give themselves permission to conclude the ministry.

Sustainability – promoting self-reliance and long-term viability

The BWM encourages that mission endeavors:

1. Envision an end to their endeavor and have given serious consideration as to how that might happen well (have an exit plan).
2. Strive to equip all partners to sustain their (our) own future.
3. Are not dependent on outside resources being provided indefinitely.
4. Have identified the resources necessary to both begin and continue their endeavor and identified from where those resources will come, looking first to their own gifts and abilities.
5. Depend upon definite, well-defined commitments from participants.
6. Encourage local people to provide for their own leaders prior to depending upon outside funding.
7. Invite local people to handle issues at hand, rather than immediately stepping in to solve their problems.
8. Do not give the impression that the Gospel is about the benefits that come with outside resources.
9. Encourage others to claim the blessing of doing what they can do for themselves, rather than insisting on doing it for them.

**“For we are God’s servants, working together.”
1 Corinthians 3:9a**