

# Funding Philosophy

## Scripture guides our work to fund God's mission.

The Bible guides us on how to best steward the many gifts that God provides. We are taught to be generous, joyful, faithful, and sacrificial in our giving. We bring our first fruits as offerings to the Lord in gratitude for all that He gives us. Scripture also provides us models of organizational fundraising to support the work of God's mission. 2 Corinthians 9, in particular, shows His call on the resourced Church to provide for the under-resourced in order that none in God's family should be lacking.

Scripture makes clear that everything belongs to God and that we (His creation) are both the beneficiaries and stewards of His generosity. Our whole life belongs to God and we offer it back to Him as a living sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> The Christian life is a life of giving<sup>2</sup> and responding gratefully to God's generosity<sup>3</sup>. Scripture demonstrates repeatedly that support for mission and ministry is an important way He desires us to use what we've been given. God desires that these gifts be offered joyfully and freely, not out of obligation, but from a heart "stirred up" by God's Spirit.

We believe that God has offered His greatest gift, salvation, and that He has charged His followers to make that offer known. Jesus, in His final words, commands us to "go and make followers of all people in the world" (Matthew 28:19 ERV). Bible League International exists to help fulfill that Great Commission. We depend on God for all our needs, confident He will supply the resources necessary to accomplish this responsibility.<sup>4</sup> We devote ourselves to God through prayer to seek His leadership and direction for our work. If we feel we lack resources, we need to ask God to provide them<sup>5</sup> and to ensure that our motives align with His.

Our mission of serving the under-resourced Church with Bibles and training to transform lives, is guided by scripture, fueled by prayer, and funded by donors. This ministry would not be possible without donors. Our fundraising program is a ministry of service to and with donors.

We serve donors by providing a vehicle through which they accomplish the mission God places on their hearts to provide His Word to others. We serve them by providing honest and timely reporting on how their gifts are used, and the impact that they are having. We understand that the Biblical practices of giving and stewardship are essential in Christian discipleship. Our work with donors is an element of their spiritual formation, and of ours.

We serve with donors by recognizing the critical role they play in Bible League's mission. We pray for donors and support their spiritual walk, through prayer, education, and inspiration. We help donors see

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 12:1 "...offer your lives[a] as a living sacrifice to him."

<sup>2</sup> Acts 20:35 "...You will have a greater blessing when you give than when you receive."

<sup>3</sup> Luke 19:8 "...Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor..."

<sup>4</sup> Philippians 4:19 "My God will use his glorious riches to give you everything you need..."

<sup>5</sup> John 14:13 "...if you ask for anything in my name, I will do it for you."

that their gifts are leading to life change and salvation in individuals and communities around the world, and that their giving brings praise and honor to God.<sup>6</sup>

## Donors play an essential role in this work.

Giving is a tangible way in which God's servants help advance His kingdom. Bible League's donors contribute prayers, time, insights, and financial support. Many are advocates and ambassadors. They share a love for the Gospel and a desire to see it spread.

Donors are an integral part of Bible League, equal partners in sharing God's Word along with those in the field and the office. They are God's chosen vessels to fund the ministry. They also have the capacity to be a source of input and insight regarding the movement of God's Spirit.

Donors are valued and treated with great respect, honor, gratitude, and prayer. We seek to understand their hearts and connect them to programs and aspects of Bible League which align with their areas of passion.

We show respect for donors by being faithful and trustworthy stewards of their gifts, reporting on uses and impact, honoring their wishes to the best of our ability<sup>7</sup>, and readily and openly responding to requests for information. We are accountable to them and to God for how we use the funds that God provides through the donors.

## We commit to responsible communication with donors.

We work to build thriving, trusting, long-term relationships with donors that are mutually rewarding and that strengthen the Church around the world. To that end, we communicate with them regularly with a blend of information, inspiration, and invitation, providing useful and meaningful information to affirm their investment in the ministry as reflected in our Annual Report<sup>8</sup>. We thank them frequently and offer opportunities to engage with our partners through letters, in-person, or through video recordings. To become better stewards, we encourage and consider feedback.<sup>9</sup>

We must provide clear, compelling, and accurate information donors need as they prayerfully consider supporting Bible League's ministry.

Each donor is unique, so we strive to personalize communications when possible. We use a mix of content (words, pictures, video) and various delivery methods (mail, email, web, social media, phone call, visit) to best serve the relationship. Communications should help donors connect personally with Bible League's mission and our partners in such a way that reinforces their place in the global ministry.

Through relevant, timely, cost-effective, and relational communication, we demonstrate both the powerful transformation of lives as they develop a relationship with Jesus Christ through God's Word, and the ministry context in which that transformation takes place.

We share stories and moments that we hope donors will long remember and, in turn, share with others.

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<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:12-14 "...This service is a proof of your faith, and people will praise God because of it..."

<sup>7</sup> See Bible League's Gift Acceptance Policy and [Privacy Policy](#).

<sup>8</sup> Bible League's Annual Report can be found at [bibleleague.org/financial-accountability](https://bibleleague.org/financial-accountability)

<sup>9</sup> 1 Peter 4:10 "...be good servants and use whatever gift he has given you..."

We always invite the donor to respond—with prayer, their time, another gift, or a further commitment to continue building the relationship.

Following Jesus as our model for life, we conduct ourselves with love, honesty, and integrity.<sup>10</sup> In practice, this means:

- We communicate in a truthful, clear, and transparent way about what we and our global ministry partners do and how we do it.
- We give donors an appropriate picture of ministry work, fundraising activities, our finances, and our structure.
- We share that project support, fundraising, and administration are necessary tools for a sustainable and reliable development function, and that the costs for these services are financed by donations.
- We do not show people in our pictures or stories in a humiliating way. We work to demonstrate the need while protecting the dignity of those whose need we show.
- We share true stories of God’s work through Bible League’s ministry, using words and images that fairly and accurately portray actual events.
- We avoid stock photography and AI-generated images. We use actual names and images (unless prevented by security precautions). We can trace stories and pictures back to their original sources.
- We speak respectfully of other organizations engaged in similar activities to ours, understanding that we share the same calling.
- We respect that differences exist in Christian theology and yet strive to serve God in unity with all Christ-followers.
- We are rooted in our Christian faith, but we speak respectfully of other religious beliefs.
- We do not deliberately pressure donors concerning a donation. We purposely try to avoid inducing feelings of guilt with our communication. We aim for the wholehearted and joyful giver, trusting God through His Holy Spirit to move the hearts of His people and provide the funding necessary to fulfill the calling He has given us.
- In all our work and our communications, we give glory to God for all that He does.<sup>11</sup>

## We commit to a principled funding approach.

We strive to steward well, the resources the Lord has entrusted us. We are first accountable to God; we long to hear the words, “Well done good and faithful servant”<sup>12</sup>. We commit to honoring God by following the highest ethical standards in fundraising and in stewardship.

We approach funding decisions from a resource-based perspective (stewarding what we have) as opposed to a deficit-based perspective (focused on what we do not have). This perspective drives us to seek a high level of efficiency with our spending. It also necessitates a high level of accountability. To that end, we adhere to the standards of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability<sup>13</sup>, which include:

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<sup>10</sup> Psalm 84:11 “The Lord freely gives every good thing to those who do what is right...” and Philippians 4:9 “...do what you learned and received from me—what I told you and what you saw me do.”

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 96:3: “Tell all the nations how wonderful he is! Tell people everywhere about the amazing things he does.”

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 25:14-30 “Well done good and faithful servant...”

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ecfa.org/Standards.aspx>

- **Transparency:** We provide copies of current financial statements upon request and provide other disclosures as the law may require.
- **Financial Oversight:** We prepare complete and accurate financial statements. The board approves the engagement of an independent certified public accountant, reviews the annual financial statements, and maintains appropriate communication with the independent certified public accountant. The board shall be apprised of any material weaknesses in internal control or other significant risks.
- **Truthfulness in Communications:** In securing charitable gifts, all representations of fact, descriptions of the financial condition of the organization, or narratives about events must be current, complete, and accurate. References to past activities or events must be appropriately dated. There must be no material omissions or exaggerations of fact, use of misleading photographs, or any other communication which would tend to create a false impression or misunderstanding.
- **Giver Expectations and Intent:** Statements made about the use of gifts by an organization in its charitable gift appeals must be honored. A giver's intent relates both to what was communicated in the appeal and to any instructions accompanying the gift, if accepted by the organization. Appeals for charitable gifts must not create unrealistic expectations of what a gift will actually accomplish.
- **Acting in the Best Interest of Givers:** When dealing with persons regarding commitments on major gifts, our representatives must seek to guide and advise givers to adequately consider their broad interests. We must make every effort to avoid knowingly accepting a gift from—or entering into a contract with— a giver that would place a hardship on the giver or place the giver's future well-being in jeopardy.
- **Charitable Gift Communication:** We provide givers appropriate and timely gift acknowledgments.
- **Percentage Compensation for Securing Charitable Gifts:** We do not base compensation of outside stewardship resource consultants or our own staff directly or indirectly on a percentage of charitable contributions raised.

We actively seek and collaborate with League partners whose operational capacities and practices are consistent with the above ECFA standards, and whose ministry practices align with our core philosophies<sup>14</sup>.

Funding decisions are made collaboratively with input from the partners who implement the ministry, the teams who serve the partners, and Bible League's executive leadership team. A defined process, multi-year planning approach, and set of Global Ministry Priorities help us align available funds with the defined needs and opportunities in the field. This approach is necessary both for accountability to donors, and because the need almost always exceeds our capacity.

Partners receiving grants of funds and materials provide regular reporting on usage and impact. Field visits and conversations provide opportunities to learn, share practices, promote transparency and ensure accountability.

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<sup>14</sup> Bible League International's Ministry Philosophy, Partnership Philosophy, Leadership Philosophy, Board Philosophy, Funding Philosophy

## League partners may also help fund the mission.

Whenever and wherever God has called His children to a specific work, He has raised up resources to provide for that work.<sup>15</sup> It should come as no surprise, then, that God continues to provide for the work to which He has called us today.

It has been Bible League's model to raise funds from the resourced Church in order to provide for the under-resourced Church. As God's Spirit builds up the under-resourced Church, it can be expected that here, too, He will raise up followers eager to help fund its operation, and eager to pass on to others what they themselves have received. Like the Macedonian Church in 2 Corinthians 8, they may even desire to give from their poverty to help the larger body of Christ.

Bible League offers its ministry without expectation of financial return. We seek to provide all that is necessary for ministry partners to carry out their work without distraction or financial obligation to BLI.

However, we must not stand in the way of God's generosity.

"Generosity is present in all cultures," says Nigerian ministry leader Kehinde Ojo. We understand that generosity is not a function of wealth, but of spiritual development. Providing a ministry partner the opportunity to raise some portion of the funding needed to fully implement the program:

- Enables growth and strengthening of the partner,
- Diminishes resource dependency on one or more other partners in the League,
- Enhances the partner's capacity to anticipate, cope with, and/or recover from challenges,
- Provides greater opportunity to live out the Great Commission to the full<sup>16</sup>, and
- Builds up the capacity of the whole Bible League.

Indeed, Bible League's Partnership Philosophy envisions a joint-resourcing model in which "BLI and the partner agree to acceptable terms of project funding according to the resources and capacity available to both organizations." The document goes on to acknowledge that "project resourcing depends upon many factors, such as each organization's maturity or access to financial resources, time commitments, and level of focus on the collaboration. Resourcing is an ongoing consideration and negotiation between BLI and the partner as the relationship develops and ministry efforts grow. For those partners who depend primarily upon BLI's financial resources to sustain their ministries, we will continually assess, dialogue, and develop strategies with them to move toward a jointly funded resourcing structure."

Joint resourcing is not about replacing funds provided by Bible League International. Instead, it is desirable as a way to augment grants provided by the organization. It seeks a greater degree of self-sustainability for ministry partners, among the other benefits listed above. Developing fundraising plans and approaches jointly involves dialogue about capacity, opportunity, accountability, and related factors.

Bible League partners may accept offers of local funding in accordance with local laws and customs. As ministry partners mature and grow; it should not be surprising to see their ability to self-fund develop.

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<sup>15</sup> Building the tabernacle (Exodus 35:20-29), building the temple (1 Kings 5:1-12), rebuilding the wall (Nehemiah 2:1-8), Jesus' ministry (Luke 8:1-3), early Church (Acts 5:32-37), Paul's ministry (2 Corinthians 11:9), etc.

<sup>16</sup> "If every culture has received the Great Commission, then every culture has the privilege of supporting the Great Commission." -Scott Morton, *Funding Your Mission*

Bible League International will offer support to partners in their fundraising efforts, which may include:

- Developing relationships with potential donors referred by the local ministry and processing their gifts on the ministry's behalf
- Providing funding advice that is culturally sensitive and appropriate for the country or region
- Creating funding tools to help the ministry present its case to potential donors
- Sharing data, stories, resources, controls, and best practices

Strong systems of accountability are crucial to the success of any partner fundraising initiative. Michael M. Wamache, executive director of the African Council for Accreditation and Accountability, says that “elements of accountability and governance work through groups or communities rather than through one individual.” He notes three spheres of accountability: with God<sup>17</sup>, with peers<sup>18</sup>, and with governments<sup>19</sup>. Attention to each of these should be a hallmark of any Bible League funding effort.

## Conclusion

Faithfulness to God's Word is foundational to all our decisions and actions. We are accountable to God and people to wisely steward the resources God entrusts to us. Building strong, trustworthy relationships with colleagues, ministry partners, donors, and vendors is essential to the fulfillment of our ministry commitments.

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<sup>17</sup> Romans 14:12: “So each of us will have to explain to God about the things we do.”

<sup>18</sup> Luke 10:1: “He sent them out in groups of two.”

<sup>19</sup> 1 Peter 2: 13: “Be willing to serve the people who have authority[a] in this world”