

Partnership Philosophy

Introduction

Bible League International (BLI) desires to see thriving local churches around the world offer salvation, life change, and hope through biblically-based training and resources that meet the spiritual, moral, and social needs of their communities. BLI believes that the fulfillment of this vision is too great to accomplish alone. Therefore, faithfulness to the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 to make disciples of all nations requires a strong network of partners with a compatible vision.

Partnerships, then, are essential to BLI's mission. BLI serves the under-resourced Church through partnerships that implement BLI's Scripture engagement programs (Project Philip, Church Planter Training, and Bible-based Literacy) in close proximity and access to the local church. BLI's partners maintain strong relationships and effective training and communication with their network of churches and communities. Our partners have the essential passion and expertise to navigate social, economic, cultural, and political waters of their local contexts in order to establish and maintain the continuity of local Scripture engagement efforts.

What kind of partners does BLI seek?

BLI seeks partners with a commitment to Scripture engagement as the foundational means by which people encounter and enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ. BLI believes that the Bible is the written word of God that points to his Son Jesus Christ, the Word of God (Jn. 1:1-18; Heb. 1:1-3; 1 Jn. 1:1-3). Therefore, BLI desires to work with partners who desire to incorporate Scripture engagement as a critical part of their ministry activities.

BLI also seeks partners who have a passion for the local church. BLI believes that the Church, as the body of Christ (Eph. 1:23), is central to the fulfillment of Christ's command to make disciples of all nations. BLI desires to serve and equip local churches as they desire to follow Jesus in earnest through evangelism and discipleship. As people are involved with BLI's Scripture engagement programs, BLI's intention is that these people may be supported, encouraged, and invited into fellowship with a local church who may nurture their ongoing discipleship. BLI, then, seeks partners with a commitment to the growth and the mission of the local church. BLI partners must exhibit healthy and positive relationship with churches from various denominational and doctrinal commitments.

BLI desires long-term relationships with its partners. However, BLI recognizes that some unforeseen circumstances may necessitate ending the relationship, including incapacity of local partners, illicit activities, or conflicts regarding process and vision. When necessary, BLI will end relationships with local partners through respectful dialogue and due consideration of the interests of both BLI and the partner in order to separate amicably and fairly.

What expectations does BLI have of its partners?

According to BLI's Ministry Philosophy, BLI endeavors to open ministry fields and implement programs through a systematic assessment process that builds relationships with partners while assessing their

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capacity to own and manage BLI's Scripture engagement programs for long-term growth and sustainability. Consequently, BLI seeks partners with . . .

- *Compatible vision:* BLI acknowledges that long-term partnerships depend upon compatible visions between BLI and the partner.
- *Strong board governance:* BLI expects partner organizations to be legally registered in their country or countries of operation and be governed by a board of directors that exhibit integrity, responsibility, involvement with the mission, financial accountability, and staff accountability.
- *Capacity to implement BLI's program standards:* BLI expects that partners will be willing and able to implement BLI Scripture engagement programs according to BLI's standards of training, use of materials, impact reporting, and grant accountability. Additionally, BLI expects that partners will provide periodic communication regarding program impact, including testimonies and stories, photos, videos, or other requested material.
- *Capacity for a reciprocal and equal partnership relationship:* BLI desires relationships with partners in which both organizations can contribute equal value and service to one another in the relationship. BLI expects that, through our mutual activities including ministry programs and fundraising, the partnership will leverage each organization's strengths and build a capacity for exponential impact growth in the areas we mutually serve.
- *Strong church and ministry networks:* BLI desires to work with partners who have access to diverse networks with the under-resourced churches or other ministries who serve under-resourced churches within reach of the partner's influence. BLI expects that the partner is able to maintain healthy, service-oriented relationships to these churches and ministry organizations.
- *Capacity for long-term growth:* BLI desires to work with partners who demonstrate growth potential through strong vision accompanied by thoughtful and sustainable strategies.

What role will BLI take in partnerships?

BLI's ultimate aim with partners is to implement its Scripture engagement programs (Project Philip, Church Planter Training, and Bible-based Literacy) in such a way that both BLI and the partner organization benefit. As conversations progress, BLI is open to discuss its participation in activities or investments that build the partnership and lead the relationship toward implementation of its Scripture engagement programs within the constraint that such activities do not violate BLI's tax-exempt purpose.

Furthermore, in support of a successful launch and implementation of its Scripture engagement programs, BLI will provide the following support:

- *Training:* BLI's Scripture engagement programs are most effectively carried out in the context of relationship and conversation. Therefore, training is critical to provide participants with a level of comfort with and fluency in the inductive Bible study method, the proper use of BLI's engagement materials, appropriate conversational approaches to Scripture engagement, and BLI's reporting requirements.

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- *Operational support:* BLI is committed, subject to operational and funding constraints, to providing partners with everything as necessary for a successful and positive experience with BLI's Scripture engagement materials, including proper reporting mechanisms. BLI will discuss these needs with partners as a reflection of a growing, maturing partnership.
- *Communication:* BLI endeavors to stay closely involved with our partners as they execute our Scripture engagement programs. Therefore, BLI commits to regular and respectful communication with our partners regarding feedback, training, changes, plans and budgets, strategic growth initiatives, and challenges. Additionally, BLI commits to communicate with staff, board members, and donors of BLI about the good work our partners are doing.
- *Publishing and logistical support:* BLI will work closely with our partners to ensure that the Scripture engagement materials they use are appropriate for use by the intended audiences, formatted and designed for ease of reading and use, delivered in good condition for timely program launch, and continually reviewed for improvement.

What functions do BLI program partners typically serve?

According to BLI's Ministry Philosophy, BLI will implement our programs through long-term relationships with ministry partners and local churches. Through a systematic process that builds relationships with potential partners, we will respectfully assess the strategic fit of BLI Scripture engagement programs with the partner's vision, mission, and capacity to carry out programs successfully. Therefore, we begin the partnership assessment with an open and hospitable conversation that seeks out opportunities to bless each other's ministry through partnership.

Because BLI believes that Scripture engagement is essential for people to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ, we desire to work with partners that share the same value so that we are mutually committed to serve each other with quality Scripture engagement programs and implementation strategies and tactics. While BLI's Scripture engagement programs can be implemented successfully and impactfully by themselves, we believe that they can also be adopted to fit within various ministry contexts – church outreach, social justice and holistic ministry, literacy and evangelism, etc. While the context for implementing our programs may vary, our ministry partners consistently advance BLI's vision through the following facets:

- ***Scripture Access*** – partnerships provide access to the Bible in communities where such access is limited. This includes partners to whom we license or sell our Bibles texts for use in their own Scripture engagement programs.
- ***Scripture Program Development*** – partnerships provide opportunities to develop excellent Scripture engagement training curriculum for different intended audiences. In these strategic partnerships, BLI and the partner mutually share expertise, knowledge, and resources to develop the curriculum. Two examples include:
 - Our partnership with Prison Fellowship International has allowed us to develop Scripture engagement curriculums specifically for prisons.

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- Our partnership with Literacy and Evangelism International has allowed us to develop Bible-based Literacy curriculum to enhance our Scripture engagement programs.
- **Scripture Engagement** – partnerships provide opportunities to implement Scripture engagement training within various networks of under-resourced churches and communities through different media outlets (i.e. print, digital, audio).

Within all three functions of partnership, BLI and the respective partner develop appropriate funding strategies to grow the function. The general categories of our partners' resourcing include:

- *Fully Resourced* – Partners may buy or license materials from BLI. BLI provides training and the partner provides usual ministry impact reporting. But they are financially independent.
- *Jointly Resourced* – BLI and the partner mutually develop and fund the Scripture engagement program.
- *Under Resourced* – BLI provides the majority, if not all, of their financial support for the Scripture engagement programming they implement.

Partner resourcing depends upon many factors, such as the partner's maturity or access to financial resources, time commitments, and level of focus on BLI's Scripture engagement programs. Resourcing is an ongoing consideration and negotiation between BLI and the partner as the relationship develops and ministry efforts grow.