



 BAPTIST WORLD AID

# ORGANISATIONAL FAITHFULNESS

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MARCH 2025



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# Introduction

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These theological reflections were developed to establish a foundation for biblical faithfulness for the organisation to underpin our ongoing mission to see poverty ended and all people experience fullness of life as God intends.

Together, the reflections are designed to:

- Acknowledge our Christian motivation, the intentions of our founders, and to remain faithful to these.
- Articulate our place in God's mission and restorative plan for our broken world.
- Be a foundational document that informs our vision, mission, values and strategic planning.
- Clarify the type of impact we strive for, both internally (on and through employees and volunteers) and externally (on and through our supporters, church partners, project partners and participants).
- Provide a robust theology and shared language in support of our vision of a better world for all.
- Provide an opportunity for a continual review of Baptist World Aid Australia's faithfulness to Christ.

These reflections aim to take the knowledge and wisdom of God and articulate it in a way that can be applied to every activity in the organisation. It's designed to affect policies and processes, but also individual and corporate behaviour. While the organisation has previously had a clearly defined theology of development—which is referred to in this document—other important functions will now be theologically framed that will impact areas including human resources, finance, risk and strategy.





The theological reflections are the culmination of a year long journey with the staff team and Board of Baptist World Aid Australia who together collated ideas and refined the areas of reflection down to seven. A selection of resources were provided and staff and board were invited to further reflect, discuss and debate together including at Vision Day 2024. The Church Partnerships Team led this process of staff engagement, with the deeply valued professional guidance of our consultant Kara Martin, a respected Baptist theologian and academic, and a good friend to Baptist World Aid. A Board working party provided further reflection and wisdom. The reflections deal with seven areas:

1. Organisational Identity (Leadership and Governance)
2. Working Together
3. Risk
4. Development
5. Being a Prophetic Voice
6. Partnership (Church and Local Christian Partners)
7. Stewardship

Each reflection includes questions/implications related to actions of behaviour.

These reflections will be used in recruitment, induction and training; as well as to underpin our values, policies and strategy. We intend to engage with them and reflect further on them regularly, as we form ourselves and our stakeholders around them.

We believe that these reflections will enable us to drive an organisational culture of faithfulness to God's mission to end poverty and see all people experiencing fullness of life.



*Melissa*

**Melissa Lipsett**  
CEO





01 | THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON

# ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY



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# 01 Theological Reflection On Organisational Identity

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We believe that God called Baptist World Aid into being through the radical care and action of God's people.

Our identity as a Christian organisation involves our leadership and governing bodies being attentive to empowering the organisation and its employees to walk in the way of Jesus, with the Baptist distinctive of being collaborative in sharing Jesus and seeking justice. We are followers of Jesus responding to, and extending, the invitation to co-labour with Christ in the restoration of our world.

In our governing we seek to show wisdom as the Bible encourages.<sup>1</sup> We seek to be good stewards of all that God has given us.<sup>2</sup> We seek to honour God,<sup>3</sup> being conscious that our primary purpose, and calling, is as a Christian not-for-profit development organisation rather than a church, although our work is an act of worship.

In our leading, we seek to model Jesus in serving others rather than holding on to position, resources or power.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 2:6–8 tells us that God is the source of wisdom. Solomon was offered anything he wanted by God and his request for wisdom pleased God: 'So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?' (1 Kings 3:9)

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:28, also known as the creation mandate, is God's command to steward his creation, bearing his image. We do this through our daily work, and organisations have a particular responsibility to honour God, care for people and care for God's creation.

<sup>3</sup> In 1 Samuel 8 Solomon dedicates the temple, naming all the ways it will be used to honour God and serve the people: <sup>47</sup> 'May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our ancestors (founders); may he never leave us nor forsake us. <sup>48</sup> May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave.'

<sup>4</sup> Jesus' actions in washing the feet of his disciples as a servant or slave (John 13:1–17) remind us of our need to constantly use our power to empower others, and to be humble. As Jesus himself said: 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' (Mark 10:42–45)



## Implications for Baptist World Aid:

1. We seek to be faithful to our God-given mandate, while being bold in embracing change.
2. We are conscious of the temptations of power and the responsibilities of stewardship, so we seek to act with integrity and transparency.
3. We grow leaders who serve God, serve their teams, and who learn from mistakes.
4. We foster an organisation committed to good deeds and best practice, alongside repentance and grace.
5. Our measurement of success will be our faithfulness to God's mission, and in serving our partners.

## Questions to ponder:

- Why do we focus on doing good rather than excellence? Are these mutually exclusive or complementary?
- What does repentance and grace look like in a workplace?
- Why is our measurement of success faithfulness and service, alongside outcomes?





02 | THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON

# WORKING TOGETHER





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## 02 Theological Reflection On Working Together

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Baptist World Aid Australia believes that the Bible highlights the story of our relationship with God.

Human beings were created for relationship with God,<sup>5</sup> one another and creation,<sup>6</sup> but Genesis 3 records the rupture in those relationships. Jesus agreed to partly sacrifice his relationship with God the Father to achieve reconciliation of humanity and creation's relationship with God,<sup>7</sup> and is now restored to full relationship with God the Father and the Spirit.<sup>8</sup> The Spirit is actively at work transforming us for relationship with God and others.<sup>9</sup> And the new creation will see us enjoying perfected relationships.<sup>10</sup>

We are conscious that working together is often impacted by our sinfulness, leading to jealousy, selfishness, competition and conflict. And we are aware that positive working relationships are a source of joy and encouragement for all involved.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:26-27

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 2:18-20

<sup>7</sup> Philippians 2:5-8: Jesus came down from heaven and became human, then died for our sins on the cross.

<sup>8</sup> Colossians 1:15-20

<sup>9</sup> Galatians 5:22-23

<sup>10</sup> Revelation 21:3-4. In the New Creation God will dwell with us, and we will be one people together with him.

<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 4:2, 1 Corinthians 16:14, 1 Peter 4:8





In our working together we will seek to be unified as the Bible instructs.<sup>12</sup> We will be proactive in constructively resolving differences and be agents of reconciliation.<sup>13</sup> We will recognise that each person is made in the image of God,<sup>14</sup> worthy of dignity and respect. We will seek to set boundaries that empower people,<sup>15</sup> encouraging all to work together for the good of the body.<sup>16</sup> We will seek to be wise in the way we follow Jesus and care for people,<sup>17</sup> including showing grace.<sup>18</sup>

So, we are both sinful yet made in God's image; we live in this dualism and tension that frames our service. In fact, each of our own stories reflect the four-part biblical narrative: creation, fall, redemption and new creation.

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<sup>12</sup> See Jesus' words to his disciples in John 17:22–23. Unity will be a sign to those outside the faith. Ephesians 4:1–6 explains the sorts of behaviour that will lead to unity: being humble, gentle, patient and bearing with one another in love.

<sup>13</sup> Paul says that each Christian has this ministry of reconciliation. In 2 Corinthians 5:17–18 he says: '17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.'

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 1:26–27 describes humans being created in the image of God, thereby giving each person dignity and value.

<sup>15</sup> The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) are examples of rules that are in place to promote healthy community.

<sup>16</sup> The image of the body is helpfully used by Paul to remind us that God calls us to unity, not uniformity: '12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.' (1 Corinthians 12:1–14)

<sup>17</sup> Every leader has to make judgments for the sake of the people, as Paul frequently does in his letters to the churches, and as he encourages Titus: '8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. 9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. 10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them.' (Titus 3)

<sup>18</sup> Hebrew 4:15–16: '15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.' In the same way organisations should demonstrate mercy and grace, when someone seeks forgiveness; but this does not mean ignoring conflict or overlooking incompetence.





## Implications for Baptist World Aid:

1. We seek to be unified in the way we work together: united in our desire to honour God, serve people, and fulfil the mission of Baptist World Aid Australia.
2. We seek to enable each person to flourish in their gifts and to work for the greater good.<sup>19</sup> We focus on holistic growth management as a priority over performance management.
3. We seek to uphold healthy boundaries to enable positive working relationships.
4. We do not ignore conflict or cover up relationship abuse, but seek to resolve conflict, seek peace, confess wrongs, and promote accountability for healthy working relationships.
5. We recognise that working together well, while a difficult goal to achieve, is also a source of great joy and encouragement, as we demonstrate what it means to be an image-bearer of the God of love.<sup>20</sup>

## Questions to ponder:

- How does the truth that we were made for relationship (with God, each other and with creation) impact the way we read the Bible and live out our faith in everyday life?
- Why does God instruct us to work in unity? What happens if we disagree poorly?
- How do we describe the good work that God wants us to do?
- What difference does it make to think of ourselves as image bearers, reflecting God in the way that we work?

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<sup>19</sup> We recognise that God is crafting each person in Christ Jesus for the good works that he has prepared for that person to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

<sup>20</sup> Jesus said: <sup>34</sup>'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' (John 13:34) Also note 1 John 4:7-8: <sup>17</sup>'Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.'



03 | THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON

# RISK



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## 03 Theological Reflection On Risk

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Baptist World Aid Australia believes that God calls us to faithfulness in fulfilling our mission—tackling injustice, ending poverty and working towards fullness of life for all. We know that risk is an inherent part of being faithful to this mission.

God shows us an appetite for risk in inviting us to steward creation, and in sending Jesus to live, work, die and rise among us.

The Bible has many stories of people taking risks to honour God and serve others (Abraham, Esther and Paul)<sup>21</sup> and Jesus both took risks, and commended those who were faithful in risky obedience.<sup>22</sup> However, there's also encouragement to be wise stewards of the resources God grants us.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Abraham trusting God to leave the comfort of his homeland (Genesis 15:6), Esther saying, 'If I perish, I perish,' to fulfil her calling in saving her people (Esther 4:16), and Paul facing threats to his life from persecution, storms and bandits, to fulfil his calling in spreading the Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:23–27).

<sup>22</sup> Jesus took risks with relationships with the disciples and sinners (Mark 3:13–19, note, especially Judas, and Mark 2:15–16), challenged the Pharisees (Matthew 23:13–29) and agreed to take on the ultimate risk by going to the cross (Matthew 26:36–46). For his teaching, see the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30).

<sup>23</sup> See Proverbs 1:4, 8:5, 12, 12:8, 22:3; as well as Jesus' instructions when sending his disciples (Luke 9:1–6, 10:1–17).





## Implications for Baptist World Aid:

1. We're conscious that our organisation would not exist today without the risky faithfulness of our pioneers.
2. We are aware that often our local Christian Partners carry a higher physical and emotional risk than we do. And so, we're proactive in supporting them, including mitigating risk and demonstrating both care and appreciation.
3. Our careful consideration of risk will not outweigh our calling to work toward a world without poverty where all people enjoy the fullness of life God intends, and to be a prophetic voice to the church in Australia inviting them into that calling. Nor will it outweigh our dependence on God.
4. We make prayerful decisions—seeking the wisdom of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
5. We see our considered and appropriate risk-taking as an act of worship in service to God, and our hope remains in the person of Jesus.

## Questions to ponder:

- Why is God willing to take risks by inviting us to partner in stewarding creation, and by sending Jesus to earth as a human?
- How do we balance mitigation, management and minimisation of risk?
- How can taking risks be an act of worship?





04 | THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON

# DEVELOPMENT



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## 04 Theological Reflection On Development<sup>24</sup>

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Baptist World Aid Australia is the aid and development arm of the Australian Baptist Movement.

From the beginning, the biblical storyline describes God's intentions for the emergence of a world filled with healthy, vibrant creatures living in safe, just, participatory, and equitable communities who are lovingly engaged with God.<sup>25</sup> This is fullness of life.

Central to the realisation of this vision is the role of humankind. Created 'in God's image', human beings are to function as God's representatives. We're to share equitably in the earth's abundance and in the construction of our communities, while stewarding the earth and its resources in a way that fulfills God's purposes.<sup>26</sup>

Sadly, humankind fails to live as called,<sup>27</sup> resulting in the fracturing of relationships with God, within communities and with the earth. As a result, violence, poverty,<sup>28</sup> exclusion, oppression, injustice, greed and false worship become part of the human experience.<sup>29</sup> Humanitarian crises are frequent in this fractured world.<sup>30</sup> Gender and disability often become particular markers for disproportionate suffering.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Note: this reflection represents a condensing of a more fulsome Theology of Development. Please reference the [full document](#) for detail.

<sup>25</sup> Genesis 1-2

<sup>26</sup> Genesis 1:26-28

<sup>27</sup> Genesis 3

<sup>28</sup> The dominant refrain in the Bible is that people are in poverty because of human abuse of power: 1 Samuel 8:10-18; Proverbs 13:23; 22:16; 29:7; Isaiah 1:10-31; 58:1-14; Amos 1-2; 4:1-3; 5:11-12; James 5:1-5. On very rare occasions, people are described as having found themselves living in poverty as a result of their own failings (see Proverbs 10:4; 20:13; 21:17; 23:21).

<sup>29</sup> Note: the Bible points out that the rich are guilty both of sins of commission, such as violence and withholding wages and sins of omission such as neglecting to be generous (such as in Matthew 25:31-46) and failing to create inclusive social and economic systems (e.g., Leviticus 25.)

<sup>30</sup> For biblical examples, see the Flood (Genesis 6-9) and the Plagues (Exodus 1-19).

<sup>31</sup> Jesus demonstrated God's love in the way he accepted and ministered to all people, intentionally bringing those on the outside in, such as lepers (Mark 1:39-45), those who had been exiled from community (Mark 5:1-20, Mark 4:6-30), those marginalised due to disability (Mark 10:46-52) and those considered to behave inappropriately (Luke 7:36-50, Luke 19:1-10).





When sin entered the world God's good design was ruptured by evil. God however does not abandon creation but sets about redeeming and restoring it. Most definitively through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God sets about overturning injustice, violence, poverty and exclusion.<sup>32</sup> And God creates communities of faith, justice, inclusion, hope and peace to work with God in this work of re-establishing shalom with God, all people and creation,<sup>33</sup> that will be fully realised upon Christ's return.

The concept of *shalom* is at the heart of our vision for a better world for all. A better world for all means answering Jesus' call to follow him into hard places—to restore, rebuild and reconcile a broken world.

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<sup>32</sup> Genesis 8:22; Psalm 104; Matthew 5:43–48; 1 Timothy 4:4; Acts 14:17. The Old Testament does speak of God bringing disaster as an act of judgment (e.g., Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28), but these actions are also seen as extraordinary and exceptional.

<sup>33</sup> Romans 8:18–25. All creation is crying out for release from bondage to decay.





## Implications for Baptist World Aid:

Baptist World Aid Australia sees human development as people and communities moving toward right relationship with God, one another, and the earth. Both development theory and biblical teaching suggest poverty is a result of social, political and economic systems that deny people access to the resources needed to improve their well-being. This has significant implications for how we work.

1. As an agency dedicated to relieving poverty, Baptist World Aid Australia's focus is on tackling the injustice of poverty through development, relief and advocacy efforts.
2. As a church-based organisation committed to a Biblical view of development we consider it important that our work complement other dimensions of the mission of the church, including its task of evangelism. We do this by working with Christian Partners, thereby strengthening their capacity to demonstrate the love of God to people living in poverty and building relationships across which faith may be shared.
3. Because poverty is far more complex than a simple lack of material things, we focus on Community Development. We partner with communities to transform the systems in which they live so they can access and utilise the resources they need to overcome poverty.
4. We see disaster resilience and humanitarian aid as opportunities to encourage the discipleship of preparation, to show love and to acknowledge the human contribution to certain disasters whereby those who suffer from disasters are often not the major contributors to the causes of those disasters.
5. We promote the theological basis for creation care, recognising that many of our local country Partners are living at the heart of the complex interweaving of relationships between humans, God, and the earth.
6. We promote gender equity and social inclusion in our work, recognising marginalisation and injustice are primary causes of poverty. We do this in a biblically sound and culturally sensitive manner.
7. We seek to engage our supporters in a biblically-shaped, developmentally informed, whole-of-life engagement with those living in poverty. This includes framing poverty as a justice issue and praying regularly for people living in poverty. We invite our supporters to give generously to promote greater global equity, consume ethically, and advocate for just government and business practices, while also encouraging them to love their neighbour where they are, in their own lives—actively and sacrificially.

## Questions to ponder:

- What should be the balance for Baptist World Aid Australia between humanitarian aid, community development, and advocacy against the structures that cause or perpetuate poverty?
- Sometimes our activities cross political or religious lines of polarisation. What should characterise our approach to such issues?
- How critical is our work of shaping our supporters, including the church, in biblically-shaped practices on behalf of the poor and vulnerable?



05 | THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON

# BEING A PROPHETIC VOICE



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# 05 Theological Reflection On Being A Prophetic Voice

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Baptist World Aid Australia understands that the biblical narrative presents the Old Testament prophets as people through whom God spoke regarding life in relationship with God.

Prophetic messaging had two purposes:

1. To bring a critique and/or announcement of judgment; most often these were directed at Israel's leaders,<sup>34</sup> or Israel as a nation, when they had strayed from their intended vocation.<sup>35</sup>
2. To energise the people of God with an extraordinary, visionary hope by catalysing their imagination to consider a future reality existing beyond and despite current circumstances—to see a better world.<sup>36</sup>

The poetry, stories, and symbolic action of the prophets were immensely creative<sup>37</sup>—frequently using other-worldly imagery and metaphor through which current reality was invested with theological significance.<sup>38</sup>

The teaching, stories, and actions of Jesus are most fully understood within the prophetic tradition in which he came.<sup>39</sup>

Following his death and resurrection, Jesus spoke words of commissioning to his followers empowering them to continue the prophetic vocation—to bring critique against injustice and corruption, and to announce, and enact, the hope of resurrection.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Nathan spoke truth to King David (2 Samuel 12:7–10), Jeremiah spoke to the king of Judah (Jeremiah 22:1–3), and in the New Testament, John the Baptist lost his head for speaking truth to Herod (Mark 6:14–29).

<sup>35</sup> See Isaiah 58 for evidence of God speaking about injustice in every corner of society, and the way that Israel's worship activities are rejected in the light of its unreformed character.

<sup>36</sup> See Isaiah 61 and 65 for examples of this.

<sup>37</sup> For example, Isaiah preaching naked (Isaiah 20:1–4), Ezekiel directed to eat bread baked on a fire made by burning human excrement (Ezekiel 4:12–15), and Hosea being told to marry a prostitute (Hosea 1:2).

<sup>38</sup> Read Ezekiel 1 for a taste of prophetic symbolic imagery.

<sup>39</sup> While all of Jesus words and actions are more deeply understood within a prophetic framework, vivid examples of explicit, prophetic symbolism include examples such as Jesus weeping over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37–39, Luke 19:41–44) and the clearing of the temple (Mark 11:15–18, Luke 19:45–48, John 2:14–17) as well as the re-casting of himself as a typology of Moses, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).

<sup>40</sup> See John 20:21–23 and his commissioning of the disciples: Matthew 28:16–20.



To hold this prophetic voice as an organisation is to understand that even as we work to tackle the injustice of poverty, we must also hope for the end of poverty. As such, we are called to address the root causes of corruption, and disrupt the systems of injustice that keep so many people oppressed.<sup>41</sup> And while doing so, we're called to embody the character of God—being sacrificially and radically generous.<sup>42</sup>

### Implications for Baptist World Aid:

1. We humbly seek to name and challenge the causes of poverty and injustice, as well as dealing with their impact.
2. We regularly reflect on our activities to ensure that we're not being unconsciously co-opted by the powerful.
3. We speak and act with wisdom, creativity, and courage within and to the church, reminding Christians of God's invitation to co-labour with Christ in ending injustice.
4. In our desire to end poverty, we speak and act with wisdom, creativity, and courage to governments, business and other worldly authorities, seeking to be an influence for justice and good.
5. As well as speaking against injustice, we use prophetic imagination to creatively communicate a better way of living and working together towards a better world for all.
6. We collaborate with other like-minded organisations, within Australia and globally, expanding the potential for change.

### Questions to ponder:

- How do we balance critiquing our government with receiving money for aid and development programs?
- How do we balance being critical of church complacency with seeking to encouraging giving for our programs?
- How can we create more opportunities for "prophetic imagination"?

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<sup>41</sup> See Paul's list in 1 Timothy 1:8-11, which includes forbidding Christians taking part in slave trading based on kidnapping, something that was common in Roman society.

<sup>42</sup> For example, in the Mosaic Law: every seventh year all debts were cancelled (Deuteronomy 15:7-10); and every 50th year the land went back to its original allotments (Leviticus 25:8-55). See also, Psalm 41:1, Proverbs 31:8-9 and Zechariah 7:10. God is the ultimate advocate for the poor and needy: Luke 18:7-8.





06 | THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON

# PARTNERSHIP



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## 06 Theological Reflection On Partnership

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Baptist World Aid Australia believes that the Bible encourages collaboration and mutual participation in mission, even at the most basic level of not working or travelling alone.<sup>43</sup>

We see that Jesus welcomed partnership with others,<sup>44</sup> including with the women who became patrons of his work.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, the Apostle Paul encouraged partnership in all forms of ministry,<sup>46</sup> and particularly in caring for those in need.<sup>47</sup> He also used the metaphor of the body for the church more broadly—all connected and with different functions.<sup>48</sup>

We pursue and value partnerships like those encouraged in the early church—marked by like-mindedness, having one spirit, being humble, valuing others higher than oneself, and looking to the interests of others.<sup>49</sup> They also need to be marked by mutual accountability.<sup>50</sup>

The ultimate example of partnership is the Trinity (God, Jesus, Spirit).<sup>51</sup> And our goal is unity in Christ—collaborating to love the world as partners in the gospel and God's story of restoration.

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<sup>43</sup> See Genesis 2:18–20, Ecclesiastes 4:9–12.

<sup>44</sup> Perhaps the strangest one is in Mark 8:38–40, where someone is performing healings using Jesus' name.

<sup>45</sup> They are named in Luke 8:1–3, including 'Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.'

<sup>46</sup> Romans 12 is one of several lists where Paul partnered with all sorts of people, and kept in touch across distances.

<sup>47</sup> See his encouragement to the Corinthian church to partner in giving for the suffering Jerusalem church in 2 Corinthians 8:1–7.

<sup>48</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:12–14.

<sup>49</sup> These characteristics are listed in Philippians 2:1–4, and then Paul points out that they were modelled by Jesus, in the great poem/hymn of Philippians 2:5–11.

<sup>50</sup> Proverbs 27:17.

<sup>51</sup> John 17:23, and also Ephesians 4:3.



## Implications for Baptist World Aid:

1. We work in partnership with people living in poverty. They are the agents of change, and are their partners in their endeavours.
2. We model healthy partnership in our engagement with churches and our work with local Christian Partners. We especially help amplify the voices of people living in poverty through our engagement with Australian Baptist churches.
3. We recognise our responsibility to inspire churches to seek justice in their own communities, as well as through the actions of Baptist World Aid globally.
4. We regularly reflect on and evaluate our partnerships to ensure that they are marked by equity and respect, transparency and trust, mutual benefit and accountability, and by missional purpose towards a better world for all.
5. We act quickly to deal with issues of discord or conflict, being proactive in humility and grace for the sake of enduring, long term partnership.
6. We seek the spiritual growth and flourishing of our Partners, and regularly ask about their needs. We also reflect and monitor our own learning and growth through those same partnerships.
7. Our focus is on acting in faithful obedience and regularly celebrating the success of our partnerships.

## Questions to ponder:

- Why does the church often not promote the biblical model of partnership for the sake of those living in poverty?
- What are ways we can 'evaluate our partnerships to ensure that they are marked by equity and respect, transparency and trust, mutual benefit and accountability, and by missional purpose towards a better world for all'?
- What are some creative ways that we can honour and celebrate our Partners?
- What does it mean to partner with communities, and with project participants?







07 | THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON

# STEWARDSHIP



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## 07 Theological Reflection On Stewardship

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Baptist World Aid Australia believes that God gives us the privilege to steward creation<sup>52</sup> —acting alongside God and using the gifts given to us.<sup>53</sup> With that exciting invitation to partner with God in, and through, our work comes a responsibility to represent the heart and character of God.<sup>54</sup>

We are therefore called to be accountable for the way that we handle the gifts and resources given to us.<sup>55</sup>

Jesus said that our primary focus should not be on getting what we want, but on seeking God's kingdom and its establishment on earth.<sup>56</sup>

Paul spoke frankly about the needs of others, and encouraged healthy competition in being generous; and he advocated for others, rather than himself.<sup>57</sup>

The Bible contains a consistent message that God cares more about our spiritual formation, rather than us experiencing the blessings of material wealth.<sup>58</sup> In fact, Paul believed that generous giving was good for people's spiritual health.<sup>59</sup>

Ultimately, we believe that we are aligned with God's mission, and have been given the skills and partnerships with others, to unite the resources of our financial partners with opportunities to alleviate poverty and injustice. Together we are co-labourers in God's service, working together to create a better world for all.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See Genesis 1:26, 28.

<sup>53</sup> See the way that Bezalel was filled with the Spirit and wisdom and knowledge as well as artistic skills to fulfil the tasks God had prepared for him in Exodus 35:30–35.

<sup>54</sup> See Genesis 1:27.

<sup>55</sup> See Romans 14:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 which point out that each person will be held accountable for the deeds done in the body; and Luke 12:48 which speaks about the way much will be expected from those entrusted with much. See also the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30).

<sup>56</sup> See Matthew 6:25–34, 'seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.'

<sup>57</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:1–7. Paul was collecting for the church in Jerusalem, which had been impacted by a famine. He talks about the grace of God which gives the Macedonian church joy and allows them to be richly generous, in spite of their own impoverished circumstances. They saw giving as a privilege, and an act of service toward God and his people. He encourages the Corinthians to excel in this grace of giving also.

<sup>58</sup> Consider the writer of Ecclesiastes who had abundant material wealth but described it as 'meaningless' (vapour), instead saying faithful relationship with God is the true meaning of life (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14). See Jesus' parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:13–21 who died before he got to experience the wealth he has amassed. Jesus' concluding statement is: 'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.' In contrast, Peter says, 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18), and Paul says his goal is that he 'may present everyone fully mature in Christ' as the goal of their life and his ministry (Colossians 1:28).

<sup>59</sup> See 2 Corinthians 9:6–15.

<sup>60</sup> See 1 Corinthians 3:6–9.



## Implications for Baptist World Aid:

1. We're diligent, transparent and accountable in our financial stewardship, including the way we seek, hold, and distribute the resources entrusted to us.
2. Our relationships are more than transactional, and not evaluated according to financial outcomes alone. We practise economic dignity for all people we work with—donors, Partners and participants.
3. Every relationship is an opportunity for spiritual formation, encouraging growth in Jesus' likeness including devotion to prayer, a thirst for justice, empathy for the needs of others, selflessness, generosity, hospitality and trusting in God's abundant provision.
4. We do not use manipulation to gain funding but invite people to partner with us, and God, with redemptive imagination for a better world—free from poverty and injustice.
5. We have integrity in seeking funding from government and other funders, relying on our reputation for best practice, strong partnerships and measurable positive impact.
6. We express gratitude to God and to those who give and seek to continue in long term financial and missional partnership.

## Questions to ponder:

- In what ways is our organisation/department stewarding God's creation?
- How can we balance the desire to be spiritually formed, and spiritually form others, with the need to attract resources to distribute to those living in poverty?
- How can we cultivate 'redemptive imagination for a world free from poverty and injustice'?





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