

# Coalitions

A model for meaningful engagement

## Definition

*A coalition is covenant group of churches, leaders or ministries cooperating in joint action together for a common purpose.*

## Values

### 1. Focus on Collaborative Mission

Coalitions are created to meet needs, whether spiritual or material. Members of coalitions understand that they are joining an action group that shares a common commitment to pool resources to achieve a specific purpose. While reflection and discussion are an important element in developing appropriate responses to needs, members understand that they are working together to *do ministry* in viable and meaningful ways.

### 2. Submit to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Above all, Coalitions recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the vital role of the Holy Spirit. Toward that end, the members of Coalitions commit to *prayer that leads to vision that leads to risk-taking faith*. Coalitions must be birthed in prayer, their goals must be forged in the crucible of prayer, their members must be selected as a result of prayer, and their actions must arise from an ongoing commitment to prayer.

### 3. Build upon Mutual Trust

*"Can two walk together if they are not in agreement?"* asked the prophet Amos. Teamwork is essential to any meaningful spiritual endeavor, and building the trust needed for effective teamwork requires a ongoing commitment to walk in the Spirit, to listen to our brothers and sisters, and to submit to one another out of love for Christ. Members of Coalitions are willing to invest the relational time required to develop mutual trust.

### 4. Organize around Gifts and Experience

When Christ places us in his body, we acknowledge that he is our head, and that we flourish in an interdependent relationship in which unity and diversity are encouraged and valued. In the same way, Coalitions embrace the fact that their members come to the table with a variety of gifts and ministry experiences. Coalitions should define the roles of leaders and members in such a way as to *value experience* and *provide opportunities to exercise spiritual gifts*.

### 5. Commit to Sound Missiology and Cross-cultural Sensitivity

In the crucible of its successes and failures, the modern missions movement is creating a wealth of principles and practical resources. Coalitions should build upon this reservoir of knowledge and experience to ensure that their efforts reflect *'best practices' in the mission world* and *sensitivity to local cultures*. Since most Coalitions will consist of partners from more than one cultural context, it is essential that members avoid superimposing their cultural values on others.

## Operational Principles

### 1. Three Developmental Stages

Most Coalitions will follow the following logical stages of development:

- 1) Exploration: From *idea* to *interest* to *intentionality* to *form*.
- 2) Formation: From *initial meeting* to *clarified purpose* to *Covenant of Common Cause*.
- 3) Operation: From *endorsing the covenant* to *engaging the task* to *completing the task* to *celebrating accomplishments*.

### 2. The Covenant of Common Cause

Central to the success of a Coalition is the discipline of writing a summary of:

- 1) Purpose: What is the *common cause* that brings the Coalition together?
- 2) Parameters: What is the *win* that determines whether we are succeeding, and what *limitations* do we place upon ourselves? (It is as important to clarify *what we are not* as well as *what we are*.)
- 3) Expectations of Members: How do we evaluate if a member is fulfilling his or her obligations to the Coalition?
- 4) Key Relationships: What are the key relationships *within* the Coalition and *between* the Coalition and its partners? (e.g. churches, mission agencies, regional and local leadership, etc.)

### 3. Specific Roles and Responsibilities

To operate efficiently, most Coalitions will identify three specific leadership roles:

- 1) Creator (conceptualizer): Casts the original vision and recruits potential members.
- 2) Coordinator: Assumes the longer-term responsibility to lead the Coalition.
- 3) Communicator: Ensures that members and partners receive appropriate and timely information so as to move together toward their common goals.

### 4. Finances

Money has great power to both help and hinder, and Coalitions must exercise great caution to avoid creating unnecessary financial dependencies or destroy the delicate ecosystem of local finance. When requested, Encompass World Partners is willing to assist Coalitions by providing counsel and serving as their fiscal agent.

### 5. Closure

As 'all good things must come to an end,' Coalitions are urged to establish a clear understanding as to when their purpose is complete. At that moment, members should set aside time for 1) evaluation of their experience, 2) creating a list of 'lessons learned' to assist future coalitions, and 3) celebrating what God has accomplished through their efforts.