

# Understanding the Frontier Mission Fellowship

Effective membership in the Frontier Mission Fellowship builds on the following understandings:

## Our Calling

- We give highest priority to enhancing the effectiveness of the global mission effort, with particular emphasis on unreached peoples.
- We value the Bible as our most important guide, and seek diligently to gain, apply, and communicate international insight into its true meaning.
- We value obedience to Christ, particularly towards the advancement of His Cause, above organizational recognition.
- We value opportunities to serve the global mission effort – both for their immediate benefit and for the increased potential they bring for influencing others.
- We value our opportunity to pursue innovations of essential value to the mission effort, recognizing the many ways in which culture blindly resists innovation.

## Our Pattern of Influence

- We recognize effective communication of fresh Biblical insight as our most potent form of influence.
- We look for (or develop) working, self-funding models to promote – recognizing that effective models are more influential than good ideas alone.
- We are intentionally a “birthing center” for new projects and initiatives.
- We seek the multiplied understanding, obedience and effectiveness of others above our own “productivity,” being glad to “appear to have failed” as long as the kingdom is advanced.

## Our Community Life

- We seek constantly to improve the effectiveness of everything we do in light of our calling.
- We accept loving assessment of one another’s strengths and weaknesses as an essential component of achieving our individual and organizational potential.
- We value everyone called to work with us cultivating mutual love and respect that invites honest appreciation and constructive criticism.
- We intentionally separate our ideas from our identity, accepting disagreement and correction without taking personal offence where no offense was intended.
- We consider pain, concerns and suspicions as important opportunities to grow in fellowship, understanding, and accountability. We believe that these must be seized swiftly, rather than festering to poison our fellowship.
- We value the unity of our fellowship, patiently seeking to understand and improve the wisdom of leadership decisions rather than encouraging and forming opposition.

## Our Role as Individuals

- We value the increasing strength of our families, bodies, minds, relationships, and credentials as essential to the effectiveness of our fellowship.
- We seek to develop and utilize each individual member’s talents in the most effective way for the advance of God’s Kingdom, while putting the advance of that kingdom ahead of individual “careers” or the use of particular skills or background.

## Our Stewardship

- We expect each facet of our ministry to aim long-term toward living within its means and generating profit to fuel other facets of our fellowship.
- We are committed to living within our income stream while maintaining our assets for the effectiveness of our service.
- We pursue contributions to our work in whatever ways will most benefit the global mission effort, realizing that any appearance of competition for funds may reduce our ability to serve those we hope to influence.

## Our Support for Innovation

- We support leadership in pursuing innovation for the advance of God's Kingdom, realizing our opportunity to risk failures and realize goals from which others might shy away.
- We recognize that innovations may take time to prove themselves, and that they may initially require more effort than conventional approaches. We choose to support our innovations wholeheartedly and patiently until they prove themselves or leadership is persuaded to abandon them.
- We evaluate and modify our innovations in light of the goals they represent rather than the difficulty or inconvenience of implementing them.

## Our Measure of Success

- We count it success when others succeed, though we seem to fail.
- We count it success when our insights or models of influence others toward more effective ministry regardless of whether we get any credit.
- We count it success when our programs achieve a life of their own outside our fellowship.
- We count it success when our members sense a genuine calling to carry our insights into leadership circles outside our fellowship, even though we are not eager for people to leave our community.
- We count it success when members sense an increased clarity of calling, whether that calling is to stay with us or to serve elsewhere, recognizing that not everyone who joins our fellowship is called long-term to embrace our goals, values, and structure.

## Values

- We value the constructive power of voiced suspicions over blind trust, of open disagreement over passive acceptance, and of speaking the truth in love over gracious dishonesty or acquiescence.
- We value filling unmet needs in the mission effort over duplicating efforts.
- We value pioneering models for others to improve over polishing those models ourselves.
- We value patient endurance and creativity toward solving fundamental (rather than immediate problems), despite the additional difficulty usually involved.
- We value gathering input and making wise decisions over making hasty decisions.

## Leadership

- The FMF model of leadership gives opportunity and accountability for a General Director with a proven track record to lead according to his or her convictions, even when the particular direction may be difficult or unpopular.
- We expect our General Director and other in leadership to take seriously their responsibility before God as those “who must give an account” (Heb. 13:7), seeking the approval of God rather than men (Gal. 1:10, 1 Th. 2:4).
- Transparent leadership that seeks input and follows conviction allows for the kind of innovation in serving and influences the mission effort that has been the hallmark of the USCWM and other FMF projects.
- The FMF General Director and other in leadership are limited to practically by the willingness of the staff to follow, and ultimately by an internal board with dismissal power.

## Fellowship

- FMF members are thus expected to embrace God’s sovereignty over FMF leadership and to present concerns, ideas, and disagreements in a loving manner without artificially pressuring leadership to agree or appease.
- “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17).
- Disagreements are a healthy and constructive part of our community when communicated in a manner which builds up the body and the leadership.
- Should a member find such divergence of vision or conviction with current leadership that he or she can no longer support that leadership, that member is expected to find or have found another ministry in which to serve. “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?” (Amos 3:3).

## New Members

- The FMF draws members from a wide variety of backgrounds and departs intentionally from North American Evangelical culture in a variety of ways.
- New FMF members should respond to cultural patterns that differ from their expectations by seeking to understand, value, and work for change within the leadership’s worldview rather than judging and reacting against things that appear “wrong” from the new member’s perspective. “Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.” (Rom. 14:4).