



Mission Engagement Team

Western North Carolina Conference

WNCC UMC Missional Values ~ Mission Engagement Team ~ Revised April 2023

1. First, Do No Harm

- a. Emphasize working together between volunteers from outside and residents of a community, in order to help prevent dependency by being limited to one-way giving in emergency situations. (“Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ” ~ Romans 8:17)
- b. Focus on emergent leadership from among the affected community, and recognize our commonality with communities with whom we partner, in order to help refrain from paternalism. (John Wesley’s theology emphasized Christ’s “preference for the marginalized” ~ “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” ~ Luke 6:20)
- c. Strive to put the interests of those with whom we are serving above ourselves, in order to help curb any underlying motivation of serving out of self-interest. (Wesley’s asceticism was not designed to save his own soul, but rather so that he might give to others more generously ~ Wesley’s sermon entitled, “The Use of Money”)
- d. Follow models of service that focus on relationship-building and asset-based community development, looking first and foremost at the strengths of persons and their community, rather than trying to go by assumed community needs or lack of resources. (“Doing no harm means respecting the cultures and life situations of those with whom we minister.” ~Rueben Job interpreting John Wesley)
- e. Prioritize communication, collaboration, and education, in order to help create clarity with a community's intentions, and respect their engagement, contributions, and leaders in the process. (Philippians 4:8)
- f. Maintain long-term sustainability of our work in communities through these measures designed to do no harm—then to do good—striving for justice-oriented systemic change and empowerment of the community and its leaders, so that they can move forward, even though short-term compassionate solutions are also called for whether we are all always physically together there or not (Jeremiah 29:11 ~ “The Plans God Has For You”)

2. Then, Do All The Good You Can

a. LISTEN ~ *We always begin by listening to those whom we seek to work with and empower in a given community, hearing what is said aloud and striving to discern what is left unsaid.*

b. EMPOWER ~ *The community itself always guides our work. Empowerment is our by-word—of the community, its leaders, and our neighbors therein.*

c. CLARIFY ~ *Intentional and thorough preparation ahead of time is key to setting the expectations of all parties involved and gaining clarity regarding what the commitments are.*

d. Mission happens in a VARIETY of ways ~

i. **Relief:** one-way giving in times of crisis or disaster.

ii. **Advancement:** community involved in the process.

iii. **Community Development:** community-led process.

iv. **Education:** raising awareness about broken systems.

v. **Structural Change:** advocating for change of broken systems.

vi. **Creation Care:** caring for the environment.

e. Mission happens in DIVERSE settings ~

i. **Local:** within the Congregational Communities & the Districts of WNCC

ii. **Regional:** within the WNC Conference/State of N.C.

iii. **Domestic:** within the United States

iv. **International:** throughout the World

3. And, Stay in Love with God/Attend to the Ordinances of God

a. We are grounded in a belief that all people are made in the image of God, and we will strive to approach people in love because of the love Christ has shown us. (Gen. 1:27; 1 John 4:7-12)

b. Our belief in prevenient grace declares that God has preceded us in communities, therefore when we arrive in a community, we begin by building upon the faithful persons and God-given strengths already existing in the community. (John Wesley Sermon #85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation")

c. The mission of God declares that we are co-laborers, not self-proclaimed saviors. (1 Cor. 3:9)

d. Our mission will be grounded in Wesley's practical theology of linking personal and social holiness. (John Wesley declared love of God & Neighbor ~ The Greatest Commandments ~ Matt. 22:37-40)

e. We believe participating in missions is a means of grace. (John Wesley's concept of Sanctifying Grace "continuously forms us in the likeness of Christ.")

f. Mission declares the good news of Christ to the world for the transformation of the world.
(John Wesley declared, "The World is my Parish" & "Offer Them Christ" ~ The Great Commission ~ Matt. 28:16-20)

g. Our work will be grounded in the mission of God, to bring redemption to all of creation.
(Romans 8:18-25)