

# MISSIONS POLICY

## FOR

### GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH OF THE ABINGTONS.

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The purpose of this document is to clarify and communicate the objectives and procedures to be used in the development and implementation of a missionary effort supported by Grace Baptist Church of the Abingtons. This document is meant to serve as an initial guideline based upon our current budgeted giving towards missions. However, as we are able to exceed our current giving this document will be re-evaluated and revised to correspond to the increased giving and the desires of the church at that time. It is recommended that this policy be revisited when our mission budget exceeds twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) annually.

#### I. Our Mission and Mandate:

Ephesians 3:8-10 - *“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”*

We believe that the **goal** of world missions is to bring honor to the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. We therefore greatly desire to engage ourselves in missions because our sovereign God has purposed to make known His wisdom, power, grace, love, authority and riches through His Son to the world He created, but which is now in rebellion against Him.

We believe that the local church has been given the **responsibility** of missions: to make disciples by going to all the nations. This is a commission that we as a local church must accept and engage in by uniting our gifts and labors with God’s ordained imperative. Christ’s universal, unrivaled authority provides us with our mandate to go and our message to preach, and guarantees our ability to carry it out through His promised presence and power.

We believe that Mathew 28:18-20, <sup>18</sup> *“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* provides us with the **framework** of what the Lord has commanded us to do: we are to make disciples (bringing them under Christ’s authority) by going, baptizing (identification with a local church), and teaching all the nations.

## **II. Our Basic Philosophy and Convictions Regarding Missions (as per our constitution) from Article IX : Missions**

*“It shall be the policy of this Church to support primarily missions engaged in evangelization, church planting, and ancillary support services for missions. They shall be known to be in hearty agreement with our Statement of Faith, both in doctrine and practice, and be Baptist in name as well as polity. A written Missions Policy, in strict agreement with our Statement of Faith and Constitution, shall provide the guidelines by which the missions of this Church are implemented.”*

We recognize that there are many worthy Christian causes that are being uniquely used by the Lord. We as a church, however, wish to support, at least initially, missionary efforts directly related to evangelization of the lost, edification of new believers, and multiplication of new Baptist churches. This appears to be the ministry focus of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14:19-23 on their first missionary trip. Our purpose is to see the Word of God being multiplied (Acts 6:7), disciples being multiplied (Acts 6:1), and churches being multiplied (Acts 16:5).

## **III. Our Plan**

We plan to concentrate our efforts and resources in one or two specific areas or regions. Our objective is to work with missionaries and other contacts on the field. Members of GBC working with missionaries and other contacts will determine the most pressing needs that exist to establish and strengthen local churches. We will actively pursue meeting these needs as they are identified.

### **A. A Holistic Approach**

Furthermore, we suggest that we take a holistic approach in evaluating and meeting the needs of a specific region. This means that we

- obtain a comprehensive survey of the field/region,
- seek to determine the most pressing needs,
- determine if meeting those needs would result in churches being planted or existing believers being strengthened.

These needs might include a new school for training pastors, a fully supported western missionary to go to evangelize and establish a church, or the support of a national church planter. This dynamic approach will require that we be actively involved in evaluating and meeting the needs of the field as they are identified.

We plan to look for ways to establish partnerships with local leaders who possess the character and competency to oversee and eventually assume the ministry.

### **B. Prospective Types of Missionary Outreach**

The ultimate goal of our missionary efforts and outreach is to see the resulting ministries become fully indigenous. Ideally, our term of stay and extent of involvement with these ministries will be based on the strategy of seeing them become fully independent, self governing and self-supporting by their indigenous populations.

Ministries we desire to partner with include:

1. **Church Planting** efforts – We believe that what are needed most are more churches. We want to support church planters and evangelists who have a proven character and a record of faithful service in a local church setting.
2. Efforts of **Strengthening Existing Churches** – We also want to encourage and strengthen existing churches. This could entail sending teachers, establishing schools, or simply helping to recruit new workers.
3. **Auxiliary Support Ministries** – We recognize that many ministries exist which help to plant and/or strengthen churches. Ministries such as orphanages, schools, medical teams, etc. should be considered as potential ministry partners if they are directly helping to advance our stated priorities of church planting and church strengthening in a given world region, country, city or town.

#### IV. Our Promises

With God's help we promise to faithfully fulfill our obligations to each of our ministry partners. We promise to honestly and clearly communicate our goals, intentions, and expectations to them. We promise to pray for and give sacrificially and generously to our ministry partners and their respective ministries. We desire to possess a spirit of humility and graciousness as we work cooperatively together in sincere brotherly love, striving for spiritual unity and growth in grace.

#### V. Our Commitment to the Cause of Global Missions

Our desire is to see the Good News of Jesus Christ proclaimed in every nation to every man, woman, and child. We will actively seek to provide men and women from our own congregation to go and take this message to those who have not heard. We will also strive to help sustain and support missionaries from other churches who have already gone into various parts of the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ by partnering with them financially. And last but not least, we will pray for those we send and those we support. Specifically we promise to:

##### A. PRAY

*Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; **therefore pray earnestly** to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Matt 9:37-38)*

##### Corporately

- We desire to see prayer offered for our supported missionaries on a regular basis.
- We desire to see special occasions purposely devoted to prayer for missions and our missionary partners (i.e., mission conferences, Wednesday night prayer meetings, small group prayer meetings).

### Individually

- Our church members will be encouraged to dedicate time each week to pray for our supported missionaries and their respective ministries.
- Our church members will be encouraged to implement a systematic personal prayer strategy that will help them pray faithfully for new laborers to go and gather the global harvest.

### **B. GIVE**

*“<sup>14</sup> Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. <sup>15</sup> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, **except you only**. <sup>16</sup> Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> **And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.** <sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Philippians 4:14-20)*

- We desire to allot 20% of the total general budget to the cause of missions. These funds will be disbursed in the following manner:
  - 1) We desire to financially support each missionary sent from GBC with a substantial percentage of his or her monthly needs (15% - 25%).
  - 2) We desire to generously support other missionaries and missionary efforts which align with our doctrine, purposes, and goals. Those missionaries with whom we will partner must receive a 75% vote of approval by the church. Our goal for them will be to provide at least 10% of their financial needs.

### **C. GO**

*“Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations...” (Matt 28:19a)*

We commit ourselves individually as well as corporately to the cause of missions. That commitment must be expressed through our own personal “going” with the message. Some of us will be called upon to go to a people and place far different from our own. Some will be called to go for one week, while others will go for one year or more. Whatever our particular calling, we all must be active in going with the message of Christ. We commit to go into our workplaces, our local communities, and all nations.

We will strive to:

- See our members devote time and resources to either going and/or personally supporting others in going on an annual basis.
- Actively be praying and seeking from within our own body those whom God might raise up and set apart for some aspect of global missions.

## **VI. Our Mission Team**

### **A. Make-up of the Team**

1. The Mission Team is made up of 5-7 members: 3-5 members of GBC, one of the pastors, and one deacon (appointed by the deacons). The church members will be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting to serve a three-year term followed by a one-year abstention. Women are encouraged to serve; the total number of women, however, is not to exceed one-half of the Team.
2. One male member of the Team is to be elected by the Team to serve as the chair. He will oversee the general responsibilities of the Mission Team. He will set the agenda, moderate, and direct regular meetings in cooperation with the pastoral staff.
3. One member is to be elected by the Team to serve as the secretary who will record, read, and regularly submit the minutes to all members of the Mission Team and the church clerk.

### **B. Qualifications of Team Members**

1. Must be a member of Grace Baptist Church who is willing to devote time and energy to serve on the Team.
2. Must be familiar with the GBC Mission Policy and be willing to follow it as the guideline for actions and decisions.
3. Must be committed to praying regularly for GBC missionary partners, mission outreaches, and the Mission Team.
4. Must be willing to regularly attend Team meetings.
5. Must be willing to communicate regularly with missionary partners, and relay information from the missionary partners in a timely manner to keep the congregation informed.
6. Must be willing to assist in the planning and support of mission conferences.
7. Must be willing to assist in the planning and support of short term mission trips (see Section IX).
8. Must be willing to participate in short term mission trips (see Section IX).

### **C. Responsibilities of the Team**

1. Promote missions to GBC body through regular communication of worldwide mission needs.
2. Organize and encourage congregational involvement in mission conferences.
3. Plan regular mission trips for GBC members.
4. Recommend to the church specific mission projects.
5. Evaluate annually all GBC missionaries and their ministries.
6. Review annually the support levels of all GBC missionaries and submit a report with financial needs and suggested increases to the body.
7. Screen and suggest missionaries to be supported financially and by prayer.
8. Care for and oversee regular communication with all supported missionary partners.

## VII. Our Mission Partners

### A. Qualifications:

*“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.” (Acts 13:1–4)*

We believe that a missionary is someone whom God has set apart for the work of the ministry and is recognized by the church as such. We believe that whether missionary partners are involved in church planting, discipling, and/or training national leaders, they will be functioning as leaders. Therefore, male missionary partners need to meet the qualifications of an elder as laid out in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. We believe that female missionary partners should meet these qualifications as well, but recognize that they cannot function as elders as prescribed in the Bible. *“Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. **I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man**; rather, she is to remain quiet. (1 Timothy 2:11–12).”* Missionary partners supported by Grace Baptist Church are to be in hearty agreement with the doctrinal statement of Grace.

*“The saying is **trustworthy**: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be **above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.** He must **manage his own household well**, with all dignity keeping **his children submissive**, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he **must be well thought of by outsiders**, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.” (1 Timothy 3:1–7)*

*“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is **above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.** For an overseer, as God’s steward, **must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.** He must **hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught**, so that he may be **able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.**” (Titus 1:5–9)*

### B. Responsibilities:

We desire the following from our missionary partners:

1. Full disclosure and explanation of their personal beliefs and doctrines. Where these vary from our Doctrinal Statement, these variances will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. This does not mean that we demand that all of our mission partners hold exactly the same theological and philosophical views as we do. We do, however, want to know where our mission partners differ so that we can better cooperate together in genuine understanding, trust, and harmony. We feel strongly about this, as it is a matter of truth and personal integrity.
2. Genuine cooperation in working to accomplish our common goals. We desire from our

missionary partners a willing and humble spirit that is quick to joyfully cooperate in achieving our common goals. We desire that our missionary partners be proactive in communicating to us the needs that exist and offering suggested solutions to meet them. As a church we promise to always be quick to hear and slow to speak.

3. **Regular Communication.** We desire to hear from our missionary partners on a regular basis. The frequency of communication will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Technological advancements have made communicating easier than ever before. It is our expectation that our missionary partners avail themselves of the best technology available to them and regularly communicate with us. Some specific things we would like to be informed of are:
  - Spiritual needs and areas of desired spiritual growth.
  - Personal physical needs
  - Ministry needs.
  - Ministry goals – what are you praying and working towards?
  - Ministry achievements – what is God doing and how do you see Him working?
  - Ministry setbacks – what have been the disappointments and losses in the ministry?
  - Prayer needs – how should we pray for you and the ministry?

**C. Support:**

It is the desire of Grace Baptist Church to be deeply involved in our missionaries' ministries. A primary way to accomplish this is to be generous in our support levels. See Section VI Part B.

**VIII. Short Term Missions**

- A. Definition of Short Term** – any mission with a time span of several days up to and including three years.
- B. Purpose** – to enable the GBC Mission Team to properly evaluate and assist the various projects they recommend for support:
  1. By challenging the GBC body to consider cross-cultural service.
  2. By acquainting GBC members with various ministries of GBC Missions and provide a greater appreciation for what God is doing throughout the world.
  3. By mutually edifying both the short term and the missionary partner on the field.
- C. Qualifications**
  1. Must be active member(s) of GBC to be considered for short term missions.
  2. Must have participated in evangelism training classes or its equivalent and demonstrate the ability to witness.
  3. Must be actively participating in the discipleship ministries of GBC.
  4. Must have an obvious commitment to Christ and His body.
  5. Must have a good testimony among the body and a good reputation with those in the community.

6. Must go through a cultural sensitivity training course where intercultural issues will be explained in order to more adequately prepare for service.
7. Must have a desire to serve in this type of ministry.
8. Must be willing to raise the necessary support to travel and serve on a Short Term Mission trip.

**D. Procedures** – the candidate for Short Term Missions must make a formal request to the GBC Mission Team in writing with a stated purpose and goals in agreement with the GBC Mission Policy.

1. The candidate must be interviewed by the GBC Mission Team.
2. After approval, the candidate must present his/her mission proposal to the entire body.
3. The candidate must secure a vote of not less than 75% (Section VI Part B) of the voting members in order to begin raising support.

**E. Support** – the GBC Mission Team will provide the candidate with advice regarding finances, passports, visas, immunizations and other travel related matters.

1. The GBC Mission Team will provide advice in raising financial support for the proposed mission trip.
2. The GBC Mission Team will facilitate communication with the Short Termer prior to and during the mission trip.
3. The GBC Mission Team will facilitate debriefing of the Short Termer at the end of the mission trip.

## **IX. Mission Agencies**

We believe that the sending and support of missionaries originates and derives its authority from the local church, which derives its authority from God as revealed in His Word, the Bible. Mission agencies are to be seen as extensions of local churches. These churches have pooled their resources to accomplish the objective of getting the missionary partner to the field. The agency serves to provide a conduit through which financial support can flow, and a format through which effective communication can be maintained between the missionary partner and the sending/supporting churches.

### **A. Qualifications:**

We desire, when necessary, to partner only with agencies that are in mutual agreement with our statement of faith and philosophy of ministry. It shall be the responsibility of the Mission Team to obtain and review the doctrinal statement of the prospective agency. If the doctrinal statement is accepted, the Mission Team will recommend the agency to the church for approval.

Specifically we would desire that the mission agency:

1. See itself as an extension of – and a service to – the local church.
2. Be able to demonstrate effective handling of mission funds to maximize use and avoid waste by cheerfully providing fiscal transparency and disclosure.



3. Be able to provide monthly reports of funds received and distributed for the agency's general operations and support of the missionary partner(s) of our church.

**B. Responsibilities:**

Grace Baptist Church of the Abingtons toward Mission Agency

1. Chooses to partner with those mission agencies which meet qualifications enumerated above.
2. Ensures the transparent accountability of the mission agency, especially – but not limited to – pertaining to the supported missionary partner.
3. Prays for the workers within the mission agency.

Mission Agency toward Grace Baptist Church of the Abingtons

1. Provides openness in communication with Grace Baptist Church.
2. Provides monthly reporting of funds received and distributed for the missionary partner as well as gifts from Grace Baptist Church used in the mission agency's general operations.
3. Provides information as it becomes available regarding hazards on the field.
4. Notifies Grace Baptist Church and the missionary partner of any impending change in respective agreements.

**X. Prospective Missionary's Steps to Support**

**A. Doctrinal Statement**

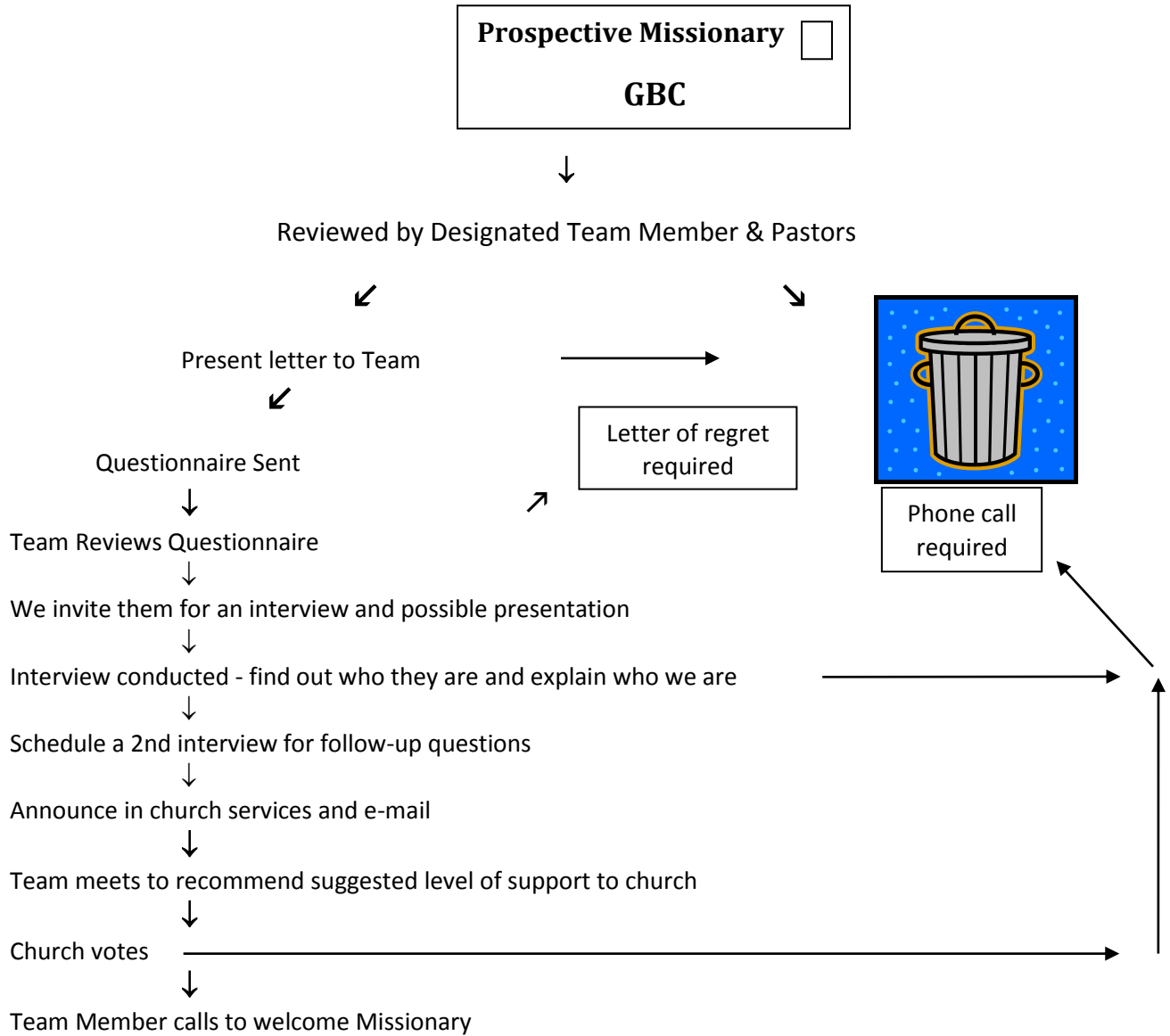
1. The prospective missionary will provide the Mission Team with a current Doctrinal Statement.
2. The Doctrinal Statement will be reviewed before the candidate is invited for an interview.

**B. Questionnaire**

Each candidate will supply the Mission Team with the following information via a questionnaire: (See Appendix for **Missionary Questionnaire Form**)

1. Contact Information
2. Education History
3. Ministry Experience
4. Personal Testimony
5. Ministry Philosophy
6. Financial Support Information

C. Recommendation (flow chart)



# Appendix A

## Missionary Questionnaire Form

### GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

#### ***CONTACT INFORMATION***

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*Please record name and birthday of:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Married? (spouse): \_\_\_\_\_

Child \_\_\_\_\_

Child \_\_\_\_\_

Child \_\_\_\_\_

*Please list any other children on a separate sheet*

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Home Church \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Church Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Is your spouse's membership the same? \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Mission Board \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tentative Date of Departure \_\_\_\_\_

***PERSONAL TESTIMONY***

When did you receive Christ as your personal Savior? Please briefly share your testimony:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Has your sending church voted to send you as a missionary under their authority? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose your mission board? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***PERSONAL INFORMATION***

Have either you or your wife previously been married or divorced? \_\_\_\_\_

*(If yes, explain on a separate sheet)*

Have you or your spouse been convicted of a felony? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you or your spouse been accused of any "inappropriate" behavior? \_\_\_\_\_

*(If yes, please explain)*

To whom do you consider yourself accountable? \_\_\_\_\_

Give name, address and phone # for a family reference \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Give name, address and phone # for a friend reference \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please include a picture or prayer card and two of your most recent prayer letters.

Please give any additional comments on a separate sheet of paper.

Will you send us monthly communication? \_\_\_\_\_

## ***MINISTRY EXPERIENCE***

What positions of service have you been active in your home church?

| <i>Place of Service</i> | <i>Position</i> | <i>Years of Service</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
|                         |                 |                         |
|                         |                 |                         |
|                         |                 |                         |
|                         |                 |                         |
|                         |                 |                         |
|                         |                 |                         |
|                         |                 |                         |

Have you read our church's Doctrinal Statement? Are you in agreement with it? \_\_\_\_\_

## ***EDUCATION***

List your education/ministerial schools graduated from:

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List your wife's education:

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## ***MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY & PRACTICE***

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Do you believe you meet the qualifications of a minister as set forth in I Timothy 3? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the work you will be doing. Give a brief statement of your immediate goals and short-term goals upon arrival on your field of ministry. Please include a statement which defines your strategy for reaching the people groups of your field. (Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

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Give a brief definition of your understanding of discipleship. (i.e., What is discipleship?) \_\_\_\_\_

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How does your ministry relate to the concept of the local church?

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What is your evaluation of the Nationals you are trying to reach, spiritually and culturally?

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What do your plans include? (Starting a Church, continuing a Church, starting a school, evangelizing the area) \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***FINANCIAL SUPPORT***

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What is your needed monthly support? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current support level? \_\_\_\_\_

How many supporting churches do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

How much do you need for Outfit & Passage? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### taken from *Leading a World Missions Church Seminar*

seminar given at Heritage Baptist Church in Lynchburg VA

Senior Pastor – Dr. F. Gerald Kroll

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## CURRENT CHALLENGES & TRENDS IN MISSIONS

### *Leading a World Missions Church Seminar*

#### THE POPULATION CHALLENGE

One of the greatest challenges in missions today is the tremendous growth in **world population**, which is expected to surpass 7 billion in 2011. The world population is made up of over 16 thousand different people groups. More than 6,600 of these people groups are unreached, representing more than 2.8 billion people with little or no chance to hear the gospel in their lifetime—that's 2 out of every 5 people. As the world population increases, the number of people being reached with the gospel has not increased. The spread of the gospel is not keeping up with the growth in population.

Another problem is the increasing violence in our world today. Across the globe there are 50 ongoing wars, 50 million people uprooted from their homelands, 1 billion people living without any basic social services, and continued threats of terrorism and persecution. Although humanitarian, medical, and sanitation efforts are helping to provide these people with a higher life expectancy, and therefore a greater possibility to be reached with the gospel, this violence is partially offsetting those gains.

#### THE THEOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN THE CHURCH

The church itself faces a **theological challenge** hindering it from the task of world evangelism. Post Modernism has affected the church, as well as the seeker movement and the emergent church. If churches are being led away by false doctrine, they will no longer be able to share the gospel with the unreached, or even see a need to. Other ideas prevalent in our society are also threatening to creep into churches. Humanism, evolution, corruption, unbridled consumption, and ethical deterioration (in issues such as abortion and euthanasia) prohibit churches from carrying out the Great Commission.

*[For more information on the theological challenges, see DVD sessions 2 and 3.]*

#### SHIFTING TREND OF LENGTH OF SERVICE

In addition to the challenges facing the world and the church, there are also challenges due to changing trends in missions. However, not all of the trends in missions are negative; some are positive and we should be encouraged to keep moving in those directions.

One current trend is that the length of missionary service has shifted from career missions to short term missions trips. Currently, there are about 43,000 North American **long term** missionaries (those whose length of service is more than 4 years), and this number is growing modestly. There are also about 8,000 North American **middle term** missionaries (those whose length of service is from 1 to 4 years), but this number may be in decline. The number of **short term** missionaries, those who serve from two weeks up to one year, is 150,000, and this number continues to grow strongly. In addition, the best estimate of the number of American **mission trip participants**, (those whose length of service is less than 2 weeks), is 1.5 million.

What does this tell us? First, that churches and mission agencies have responded—and continue to respond—to the explosion in short term missions. Second, these numbers have greatly changed throughout the years. In the past, most missionaries went overseas for a career. Then, most went for a



few years. Now, most go only for a few days. Third, though it is true that over 90% of those entering long term career missions have previously been on short term missions trips, the converse is not true: the strong growth we see in short term missions has not produced strong growth in long term missions. In other words, the explosive growth in short term mission trips has not produced more people to participate in long term missions.<sup>1</sup>

Could it be that as more people are going on short term missions trips, some of these people are using them as replacements for their responsibility—even their call—to missions? However, it is important to remember that short term trips can be very beneficial if they are taken with the right motivation [*see Chapter 7 regarding Short Term Missions Trips*].

Beyond short term missions, another trend is that the average term of service is only 4 years. After that, the missionary moves out and goes on to do something else. We need to encourage missionaries to **stay on the field**. In the first few years, there is a great amount of time, energy, and money invested into learning the language and culture. In order for there to be any return on the investments made, the missionaries must stay on the field longer.

### **SHIFTING TRENDS OF MISSIONS TASKS**

There are two major types of missions tasks: those involving **evangelism and discipleship**, and those doing **relief and development** work for the cause of Christ. When it comes to the focus of missions agencies, 5 to 1 focus on evangelism and discipleship instead of relief and development. When it comes to individual missionaries, 18 to 1 focus on evangelism and discipleship. But when you look at where the greatest amount of money is given in missions, a much greater proportion is granted to relief and development work.

Between 2001 and 2005, the amount of funds given to relief and development work grew 74%, while funds given to evangelism and discipleship grew only 3%. Seven of the top ten American mission agencies (by income) now focus on relief and development work.<sup>1</sup> Although it is possible that much of this humanitarian support may originate from outside the evangelical church, these numbers also reflect the focus of many believers. While believers should not minimize the temporal value of caring for —the least of these,<sup>2</sup> we should be careful to not over-emphasize it to the demise of the eternal benefits gained through evangelism and discipleship.