

**Vision Baptist Missions**  
**Missionary Handbook**  
Vision Baptist Missions, Inc.



*Missionary Handbook*

Version 1.4

Approved [DRAFT]

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this *Missionary Handbook* is to provide local churches and all Vision Baptist Missions (VBM) Missionaries an understanding of the identity, policies, and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions. The President and Executive Team intend for this Handbook to be consistent with the teachings of the Bible, the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of Vision Baptist Missions Inc., as well as federal, state, local, and international laws. This Handbook was prepared by the Executive Team. All VBM Missionaries must abide by this Handbook and affirm its contents each year.

## DEFINITIONS

***Missionary (Missionaries)*** - A man or woman who is sent by their local church to fulfill the Great Commission worldwide. At VBM, this includes those serving in various mission fields around the world (i.e., Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, North America) as well as the President, General Director, Field Directors, and Stateside Representatives. Every VBM Missionary is required to be a member of a local church and, though local churches delegate some oversight of their Missionaries to VBM, each missionary is accountable to his or her local church.

***Sending Church*** - An Independent Baptist church of which a Missionary is a member and which has sending authority for a Missionary, holding them accountable to carry out their ministry with integrity, wisdom, and doctrinal purity.

***Supervisor*** - A leader with VBM who has authority over a team, a department, or an individual (i.e., President, General Director, Field Director, OGTC Director, Deputation Director, Operations Manager).

## CHAPTER 1: IDENTITY

### 1.1 History

Vision Baptist Missions was born out of the heart of a local church to serve missionaries who desired to reach the world with the gospel in our generation.

In 2008, Vision Baptist Church of Alpharetta, Georgia, was preparing to send its first missionary candidate who was finishing his final preparations at the church. As the church considered sending agencies and how this missionary candidate would be sent, the church decided that it would serve him and other upcoming missionaries training at the church best to start a missions board out of the church, keeping them unified in beliefs, philosophy, and vision. Therefore, Vision Baptist Missions was created and its first missionary (to China) was accepted on June 20, 2008. He began full-time deputation in January 2009.

Initially, Vision Baptist Missions only served missionaries who were the missionary members of Vision Baptist Church. As time passed and more missionaries were sent out,

Vision Baptist Missions was approached about accepting missionary candidates from other local Baptist churches, especially those involved in the missions training of the Our Generation Training Center at Vision Baptist Church. After some consideration, Vision Baptist Missions agreed to accept missionary candidates from other like-minded Baptist churches, partnering with them to train and send missionaries worldwide.

With this extended focus and steady growth came an increased administrative burden, so Vision Baptist Missions established its own 501(c)(3) non-profit status in February 2017. Vision Baptist Church supported this step and the growing partnership with many other local churches. Although the church and mission have separate administrations, Vision Baptist Missions continues to partner closely with Vision Baptist Church as we have the same heart and vision for world evangelism. The majority of the mission board is made up of members of Vision Baptist Church, and we proudly share the same name and logo. In October 2021, a Pastoral Advisory Committee made up of local Baptist church pastors from around the United States was established to help to give counsel, encouragement, and godly influence.

Also in October 2021, the Our Generation Training Center came under the training arm of Vision Baptist Missions. This allows Vision Baptist Missions to train future missionaries to be passionate about evangelizing the world in our generation, purposed in church-planting and leader-training and prepared with humble confidence through life-on-life missions training.

In February 2022, God opened the door for Vision Baptist Missions to purchase a 16+ acre piece of property in Dawsonville, Georgia, with multiple structures that currently house the daily operations of the Our Generation Training Center and Vision Baptist Missions. This property is called “The Baptist Center for World Evangelism.”

## **1.2 Vision**

Vision Baptist Missions, Inc. is a mission agency with a vision to evangelize the world in our generation for the glory of God. We envision a world where every person has heard the gospel, every community has an indigenous Baptist church, and every church has trained national leadership.

## **1.3 Mission**

Vision Baptist Missions is dedicated to partnering with local churches to train and send missionaries worldwide.

## **1.4 Methods**

Vision Baptist Missions trains missionaries through mentoring relationships, biblical teaching, and practical instruction. Vision Baptist Missions sends missionaries by providing financial services, member care, and accountability.

## 1.5 Distinctives

Missionaries with Vision Baptist Missions are:

1. Passionate about world evangelism, seeking to evangelize the world in our generation.
2. Purposed in mission, focusing primarily on church-planting and leader-training.
3. Prepared through life-on-life missions training, developing a humble confidence.

## 1.6 Doctrinal Beliefs

At Vision Baptist Missions, we strive to make the Bible the sole authority for everything that we believe and do. Below is a summary of what we believe the Bible teaches. This is an affirmation of our faith, and though it does not exhaust the extent of our faith, we believe it accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and is therefore binding on all VBM Missionaries.

**The Bible:** We believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that it is divinely inspired. We believe in the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture. We believe that the Bible is the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man and the supreme, infallible authority in all matters of faith and conduct. We use the King James Version of the Bible for teaching and preaching in the English language.

**God:** We believe in the Trinity, the unity of the Godhead. There are three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They are equally perfect in every divine quality and execute distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. We believe in God the Father. We believe in Jesus Christ. We believe in the Holy Spirit.

**The Father:** We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

**Jesus Christ:** We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into Heaven, perpetual intercession for His people and His personal, visible return to earth. We believe Jesus is God.

**The Holy Spirit:** We believe in the person of the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment and to regenerate, sanctify and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

**Man:** We believe that all men by nature, choice and practice are sinners, but that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We believe, therefore, that those who repent of their sins and, by faith, receive Christ as Lord and Savior will rejoice forever in God's presence,

and those who refuse to accept Christ as Lord and Savior will be eternally separated from God.

**Salvation:** We believe salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who obtained eternal redemption for the believer by His blood. We believe that Jesus tasted death for all men and wants all to be saved. Salvation, in its broadest sense, includes regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Therefore, we affirm that the Gospel is the good news that God has made a way of salvation through the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for any person. This truth is in keeping with God's desire for every person to be saved. Therefore, we deny that only a select few can respond to the Gospel while the rest are predestined to an eternity in Hell.

**Eternal Security:** We believe in the eternal security of all blood-bought individuals or believers and that such inheritance is incorruptible and undefiled. The power of God keeps each believer, and nothing can separate us from Him, ourselves included. We believe that believers can lose the joy of fellowship with God, can grieve God and can quench the Spirit of God in them but not lose their salvation.

**Eternal State:** We believe in a literal Heaven, the eternal home of the redeemed. We believe Heaven to be the literal place where the saved will live forever in the eternal bliss and blessings of God. We believe in Hell, the Christ-less eternity for the lost, where there will be burning and tormenting for those without salvation who have refused to receive the gospel and Jesus Christ as Lord. We believe that Hell, unbelievers, Satan and all the fallen angels shall be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever and forever.

**Marriage:** We believe marriage is, by definition, heterosexual and between one man and one woman. Sexual intimacy is a gift from God and is to be enjoyed exclusively within the context of marriage. Ultimately, marriage serves as a type of union between Christ and His church.

**The Church:** We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of professing, born-again believers in Jesus Christ, immersed in a credible confession of faith and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that to those local churches were entrusted the perpetual observance of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and the task of proclaiming to a lost world the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the enthroning of Him as Lord and Master. The scriptural officers of the church are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the offices of pastors and deacons are limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

**The Relationship Between Church and State:** We believe that every human being is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and autonomous and must be free from any ecclesiastical authority or any illegitimate, unconstitutional, or illegal political authority; therefore, Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions with each fulfilling its duties free from the dictation or patronage of the other.

**Baptism:** We believe in baptism by immersion after salvation with no merit for salvation in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Spirit). Baptism is an outward expression of our inward faith in Jesus Christ and a public testimony of what God has done by His grace. Therefore, we reject infant baptism and any form of sprinkling for infants or adults.

**Spiritual Gifts:** We believe that spiritual gifts are given to the church for the express purpose of winning the lost and edifying other believers. The Holy Spirit is given to each believer upon acceptance of Christ, and His purpose is to exalt Christ and bring people to Christ. Speaking in tongues was the least important of these gifts in the New Testament and was a sign for unbelieving Jews. Therefore we do not teach or practice speaking in tongues.

**World Evangelism:** We believe that the Apostolic office ceased with the death of the New Testament Apostles. We believe that it is His church that He promised continual existence, to continue the work He started until He comes again. We believe that the ministry of reconciliation is committed to every believer, and all are saints/priests of God. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations.

**Biblical Separation:** We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; that they should be separated from the world while being present in the world, and that they should abstain from all appearance of evil as a testimony to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Ecumenicalism:** We believe that doctrinal purity is essential to gospel harmony and that the Bible commands us not to partner with someone preaching another gospel or teaching contrary to sound doctrine.

**Second Coming:** We believe in the literal return of Jesus Christ in the clouds to take all saved people from the earth before the beginning of the Tribulation period. We believe in the bodily/visible return of Jesus Christ with his saints at the close of the Tribulation period to rule and reign for a thousand years on earth. According to their works, we believe that unbelievers will face and be judged by God at the Great White Throne Judgment, not for salvation, but for their proper and rightful places in the lake of fire.

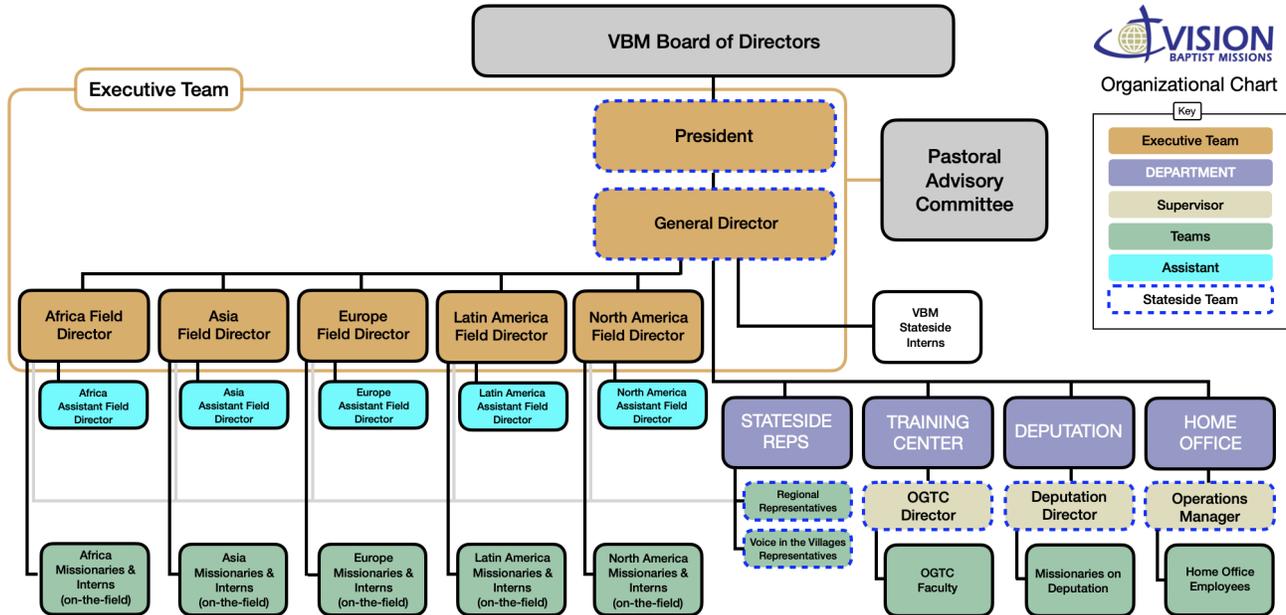
## 1.7 Core Values

In addition to the doctrinal beliefs above, Vision Baptist Missions has fifteen core values that are the foundational and distinctive guiding principles of our mission board. These values help to establish our culture, determine our practice, and accomplish our mission. We expect all of our Missionaries to value the following:

1. **Walk with God:** To prioritize a personal relationship with Jesus and become more like Him each day
2. **Build a Godly Home:** To continually work on building a God-honoring marriage and family
3. **Lead with Integrity:** To be honest men and women of godly character in every aspect of life and ministry
4. **Be a Learner:** To be teachable, continually growing, learning and pursuing wisdom
5. **Be a Servant:** To be Christ-like servant-leaders who love and serve others
6. **Be a Giver:** To be generous givers and faithful stewards of our time, resources and abilities
7. **Do Life-on-life Discipleship:** To prioritize “withness” in making disciples by spending time with and doing life together
8. **Train Leaders:** To train the next generation of Biblical leadership by investing our lives in them
9. **Start Multiple Churches:** To multiply Biblical churches that are healthy and indigenous through proper church-planting methods
10. **Work Hard:** To work heartily as unto the Lord and to labor abundantly by the grace of God
11. **Work As a Team:** To build and maintain an edifying team with a family spirit
12. **Pursue Humility:** To be meek and lowly in heart, clothed with humility and esteem others better than ourselves
13. **Extend Grace:** To be gracious in our words, deeds and interactions with others
14. **Keep a World Vision:** To stay actively engaged in “both” our local ministries and in evangelizing the whole world
15. **Strive For Excellence:** To do the best we can in everything we do for the glory of God

# CHAPTER 2: LEADERSHIP

## 2.1 Organization Chart



## 2.2 Board of Directors<sup>2</sup>

Vision Baptist Missions is governed by an independent Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is a group of wise and godly pastors and Christians with expertise in governance, finance, human resources, and other skills necessary for the effective governance of Vision Baptist Missions. The Board of Directors is responsible to:

1. Ensure that Vision Baptist Missions executes its mission according to its organizational protocols and in a manner consistent with its doctrinal beliefs and the values and principles inherent in the teachings of the Bible.
2. Operate in a financially healthy manner.
3. Engage in fundraising and resource development.
4. Provide oversight, support, and guidance for the President, including approval of the President according to the organizational policies.

<sup>2</sup> This Board of Directors is currently in development with plans for it to be fully operational in 2022. In the meantime, the President, General Director, and Operations Manager are serving as the 501(c)(3) officers of Vision Baptist Missions, Inc.

## **2.3 Executive Team**

The Executive Team is made up of the President, General Director, and Field Directors of Vision Baptist Missions. The Executive Team has the following responsibilities and duties:

1. Develop and execute Missionary policies and procedures.
2. Set support levels for Missionaries with Missionary salaries being reviewed by the Board of Directors annually.
3. Accept new Missionaries.
4. Dismiss Missionaries who do not abide by the doctrines, core values, or policies and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions.
5. Meet regularly with the Pastoral Advisory Committee for counsel and encouragement.
6. Nominate any new candidate for President.
7. Approve any new nominees for General Director or Field Director.

## **2.4 President**

The President of Vision Baptist Missions is the “Chief Executive Officer” responsible for articulating the vision of Vision Baptist Missions and overseeing the General Director and the entire operation of Vision Baptist Missions. The President is chairman of the Executive Team, leader of the Stateside Team, a member of the OGTC Administration, and is accountable to the Board of Directors to lead Vision Baptist Missions according to the governing documents, doctrinal beliefs, core values, and policies, and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions. The President is also accountable to his local church, and, as a supported missionary, the President’s pastor is required to sign off on all forms that apply to him, not limited to but including the Missionary Support Agreement and Funds Request Forms.

## **2.5 General Director**

The General Director of Vision Baptist Missions is the “Chief Operating Officer” responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of Vision Baptist Missions, which includes the Field Directors, all Departments and any Stateside Representatives. The General Director serves under the direction of the President and is a member of the Executive Team, the Stateside Team, and the OGTC Administration. The General Director is also accountable to his local church.

## **2.6 Field Directors**

Field Directors are mature missionaries who encourage and equip other Missionary families serving with Vision Baptist Missions in their region (e.g., Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America). Field Directors will also work to enlist others to their region of the world and for world evangelism. Field Directors serve under the direction of the General Director and President and are members of the Executive Team of Vision Baptist Missions. Each Field Director is also accountable to his local church.

## **2.7 Pastoral Advisory Committee**

The Pastoral Advisory Committee is a group of Independent Baptist pastors who counsel and encourage the President and Executive Team of Vision Baptist Missions as they develop and execute the policies and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions. The Pastoral Advisory Committee is outside the chain of command of Vision Baptist Missions and therefore does not exercise any direct authority over Vision Baptist Missions, but it does provide much godly influence that is a source of encouragement to the leadership.

# **CHAPTER 3: DEPARTMENTS & TEAMS**

Vision Baptist Missions is dedicated to partnering with local churches to train and send missionaries worldwide. In order to accomplish that purpose and in addition to the regional teams of missionaries on the field, Vision Baptist Missions has four stateside departments: Training Center, Home Office, Deputation and Stateside Representatives. Details about each department are given below.

## **3.1 Training Center**

The Our Generation Training Center (“Training Center” or “OGTC”) is the training arm of Vision Baptist Missions and is supervised by the President, the General Director, and the OGTC Director (“The Administration”). The Administration helps students in the OGTC acquire the needed mindset, philosophy, doctrine, and training necessary to serve the Lord and, if called by God and qualified, be accepted as Missionaries with Vision Baptist Missions. The policies and procedures of the Training Center are developed by the Administration. More details about the policies, procedures, and practices of the Our Generation Training Center can be found in the OGTC Student Handbook.

## **3.2 Home Office**

The Home Office Department of Vision Baptist Missions is composed of all the staff and volunteers of Vision Baptist Mission’s Home Office and is supervised by the Operations Manager. The Operations Manager is responsible for overseeing the operations of the Home Office which include:

1. Receiving funds for Missionaries and projects
2. Forwarding funds to Missionaries and projects
3. Managing the operating costs of the Home Office and all VBM departments
4. Sending out receipts and prayer letters
5. Processing Missionary applications and records
6. Answering phone calls and emails about the ministry of VBM
7. Forwarding mail to Missionaries
8. Preparing appropriate tax documents

The Operations Manager serves under the direction of the General Director and the President and is part of the Stateside Team. More details about the policies, procedures, and practices of the Home Office can be found in the VBM Home Office Handbook.

### **3.3 Deputation**

The Deputation Department of Vision Baptist Missions is composed of all the Missionaries with Vision Baptist Missions who are on deputation and is supervised by the Deputation Director. The Deputation Director prays for, encourages, helps, and keeps accountable those on deputation with Vision Baptist Missions. He will also have the opportunity to meet with, counsel, and provide deputation services to streamline the deputation process, such as software, media, and other tools to assist those working to get to the field. The Deputation Director serves under the direction of the General Director and the President and is part of the Stateside Team.

### **3.4 Stateside Representatives**

The Stateside Representative Department of Vision Baptist Missions is composed of the following:

1. Regional Representatives who are primarily focused on presenting the needs of and raising up laborers for a particular region of the world (e.g., Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America.)
2. Voice in the Villages Representatives who present the needs of village ministry and help to get resources into the hands of those serving in villages in a particular country or region of the world.

Stateside Representatives serve under the direction of the General Director and the President and are part of the Stateside Team.

### **3.5 Stateside Team**

The Stateside Team is a team of VBM Missionaries who are primarily based in the United States and work together to carry out their respective responsibilities and duties in harmony with one another. They will function like the President's staff and when able, will meet together for planning, prayer, encouragement and accountability. The Stateside Team is composed of the President, General Director, OGTC Director, Deputation Director, Operations Manager and all Stateside Representatives such as Regional Representatives and Voice in the Villages Representatives.

# CHAPTER 4: MISSIONARY REQUIREMENTS

Vision Baptist Missions requires all Missionaries to meet the following requirements before being accepted as a Missionary with Vision Baptist Missions. Unless specified, these requirements apply to the husband and wife of married Missionaries and to all single Missionaries, whether male or female. (For simplicity's sake, masculine pronouns are used below but may also apply to a female Missionary.)

## 4.1 Spiritual Requirements

A Missionary candidate must meet the following spiritual requirements:

1. Have had a personal experience of salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ and have been baptized by immersion after salvation in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. Agree with the vision, doctrinal beliefs, core values, policies, and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions.
3. Have been a member of an Independent Baptist church/es that is/are in agreement with the doctrinal beliefs of Vision Baptist Missions for at least two years prior to his acceptance.
4. Be a member of an Independent Baptist church that:
  - a. Is in agreement with the doctrinal beliefs of Vision Baptist Missions.
  - b. The Missionary joined at least six months prior to applying to Vision Baptist Missions.
  - c. Is willing to act as the Sending Church for the Missionary and hold them accountable to carry out their ministry with integrity, wisdom, and doctrinal purity.
  - d. Is supportive of the core values, policies, and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions and is willing to delegate some oversight of their Missionary to Vision Baptist Missions within the parameters of the policies and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions.
5. Have read the Bible all the way through at least once.
6. Have complete confidence in God for his financial, material, and spiritual needs.
7. Not be divorced.
8. Be living a life of victory over impurity and, if married, have a strong and healthy marriage.

## 4.2 Educational Requirements

1. **Male Missionaries:** All male Missionary candidates, except those serving in a Helps Ministry, must meet ONE of the following educational requirements:
  - a. Be a graduate of the Our Generation Training Center.
  - b. Have a bachelor's degree of at least 120 credit hours from an approved Bible College *and* complete a six-month internship (domestic or foreign) approved by Vision Baptist Missions.

- c. Have a master's degree of at least 30 credit hours from an approved Bible College *and* complete a six-month internship (domestic or foreign) approved by Vision Baptist Missions.
  - d. Have served for five years in full-time or part-time pastoral ministry in an Independent Baptist church *and* complete a six-month internship (domestic or foreign) approved by Vision Baptist Missions.
2. **Missionary Wives:** Before leaving for the mission field, all wives of Missionary candidates must meet ONE of the following educational requirements:
    - a. Have completed the equivalent of 30 credit hours in Biblical or ministry studies from an approved Christian university, Bible college, Bible institute, or training center.<sup>3</sup>
    - b. Have served for five years in full-time or part-time ministry in an Independent Baptist church.
  3. **Helps Missionaries:** All Missionaries who will be serving in a Helps Ministry (see chapter 9) must meet ONE of the following educational requirements:
    - a. Be a graduate of the Our Generation Training Center.
    - b. Have an associate's degree of at least 60 credit hours from an approved Bible College.
    - c. Have an associate's degree of at least 60 credit hours from any college and have completed the equivalent of at least 30 credit hours of Bible college coursework from an approved Bible college or institute.
    - d. Have served for five years in full-time or part-time ministry of an Independent Baptist church, Christian school, or other ministry similar to the type of Helps Ministry they desire to do.
  4. **All Missionaries:** All Missionary candidates must have read the following books to understand more of the heart of what it means to be a Missionary with Vision Baptist Missions:
    - a. *Challenge of Missions* by Oswald J. Smith
    - b. *Mentoring for Mission* by Günter Krallmann
    - c. *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman

## 4.3 Health Requirements

A Missionary candidate must meet the following health requirements:

1. Be able to meet the physical demands of the particular mission field to which God called him. Any serious illnesses, operations, accidents, or physical health issues must be declared on the VBM Missionary Application. Before departing for the field or returning to the field, all Missionaries will be required to complete a physical exam.
2. Be able to meet the mental demands of the particular mission field to which God has called him. Any nervous disorders or mental health issues must be declared on the VBM Missionary Application.

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<sup>3</sup> Missionary wives who joined VBM before April 2022 and are currently on deputation will be allowed to leave for the field without completing this requirement, but will be required to complete this requirement either in the United States or on the field before April 2025. Assistance and guidance will be given to work out a plan for completion that is sustainable and practical for each missionary wife.

## 4.4 Code of Conduct

A Missionary candidate must be willing to abide by the following **VBM Missionary Code of Conduct**:

*As a Missionary with Vision Baptist Missions, I agree to:*

- 1. Carry out my ministry according to the doctrinal beliefs, core values, policies, and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions.*
- 2. Attend church services faithfully and contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of my Sending Church and/or the church where I am serving on the field.*
- 3. Take responsibility for my family's spiritual growth; which, for men, includes pastoring my wife and family.*
- 4. Maintain personal devotions and educate my children in the Christian faith.*
- 5. Be a model Christian who lives a blameless, holy life; seeks the salvation of the lost; is just in his dealings; shows brotherly love and prays for the saints.*
- 6. Avoid all gossip, backbiting, slander, and excessive anger.*
- 7. Be courteous in speech, slow to take offense, and quick to reconcile.*
- 8. Abstain from all alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, tobacco products, vaping, marijuana, and any practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize my or another's faith.*
- 9. Live in sexual purity, avoiding pornography, homosexuality, and sex outside of marriage. This includes having appropriate safeguards and accountability, especially concerning work environments and communication with members of the opposite sex.*
- 10. Conduct myself in a manner that is professional and modest as an ambassador of Christ.*
- 11. Be wise, respectful, and considerate in all communication, including social media. This includes not sharing private information or communications without consent.*
- 12. Refrain from immoral conduct, making identifying statements of immoral acts, or advocating for or advancing immoral conduct. Immoral conduct is defined as bodily contact, actively undertaken or passively permitted, between members of the opposite sex or members of the same sex in order to satisfy sexual desires or any bodily contact that a reasonable person would understand to demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in an immoral act. Identifying statement(s) of immoral acts are ones in which the person does any of the following: engages in speech regarding sexual immorality; claims he or she is homosexual, bisexual, transgender, or otherwise identifies as being sexually immoral under biblical Christian standards; or uses words, language, or behavior, including by dress or other appearance or online activity that, in the discretion of the ministry, would indicate an intention to convey the impression that the person engages in, advocates for, or approves of behavior or identity that is immoral under biblical Christian standards.*
- 13. Married missionaries must remain faithful to their spouses in every aspect of life, and single (unmarried) missionaries may not participate in any sexual activity and may not live in a state of cohabitation.*
- 14. Refrain from inappropriate contact or interactions with minors, including but not limited to, sending or responding to private texts, emails, social media communications, or other electronic communications; meeting with minors alone and out of view of other*

adults or teens; phone conversations with minors without parental knowledge or permission; or any other contact that would contribute to undue familiarity.

## **4.5 Social Media Code of Conduct**

A Missionary candidate must be willing to abide by the following **VBM Social Media Code of Conduct**:

As a Missionary with Vision Baptist Missions, I agree to:

**1. Be Respectful.**

- a. *Be authentic and respectful. When posting about Vision Baptist Missions, your fellow Missionaries, other Missionaries and pastors, ensure content is always constructive and fair. Before posting, consider how other people might read and interpret your comment. You must only post content you would feel comfortable saying directly to another person without offending. If you respond to published comments that you consider unfair, always be accurate, kind, and biblical.*
- b. *Avoid defamatory, obscene, indecent, abusive, offensive, harassing, violent, hateful, racist, inflammatory, or otherwise objectionable comments.*

**2. Be Professional.**

- a. *Always act professionally and constructively and use sound judgment before posting. Always be polite to individuals' opinions, and show self-control, especially when discussions become heated.*

**3. Be Truthful.**

- a. *All information about finances, dates concerning time on the field, trips to the United States, furloughs and travel, attendance in events, the number of students, national pastors, and churches on the field must be honest and expressed with clarity and void of exaggeration or ambiguity.*

**4. Be Aware of Confidentiality.**

- a. *Understand and only reference publicly available information and don't disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to Vision Baptist Missions, its Missionaries, its supporting churches, or any third party that has confidentially disclosed information to you. Show proper consideration for other people's privacy.*

**5. Be Balanced.**

- a. *Feel free to share personal insights into your family and life, but beware of your own family's privacy and security. Use wisdom, common sense, and sound judgment with what you share so as not to cause unnecessary offense or confusion.*
- b. *Feel free to share ministry involvement and spiritual thoughts, but beware of your own ministry's privacy and security. Use wisdom, common sense, and sound judgment with what you share so as not to cause unnecessary offense or confusion.*

**6. Be Careful.**

- a. *Avoid posting questionable/offensive content or content from questionable/offensive sources. This type of content includes personal pictures, pop culture content or references, music, authors' quotes, and current social movements. You may have personal preferences that could be offensive to others.*
- b. *Limit or refrain from promoting political parties and candidates.*

## 4.6 Application Process

Below is the process a Missionary candidate must follow to become a Missionary with Vision Baptist Missions:

1. Complete the VBM Missionary Application
2. Complete the VBM Core Values Questionnaire
3. Complete a criminal background check
4. Complete a credit report and have no more than \$5,000 of unsecured debt, exclusive of student loans (This is so our missionaries can focus exclusively on their mission work.)
5. Provide the names and contact information of three references other than their pastor or a relative
6. Have completed or agree to complete financial counseling with a financial advisor approved by VBM
7. Complete an interview with the Executive Team of Vision Baptist Missions
8. Satisfy any additional interviews, exams, or requirements the Executive Team may deem necessary
9. Be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Team of Vision Baptist Missions

## 4.7 Disciplinary Procedure

Missionaries are required to abide by all the policies and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions that pertain to them. If a Missionary does not abide by any VBM policy, then the following actions must be taken:

1. **For a Noncriminal or Nonsexual Breach of Policy:**
  - a. The VBM Missionary who notices must:
    - 1) Lovingly confront the Missionary.
    - 2) Inform the Missionary's Field Director or Supervisor about the breach of policy and any actions taken to confront the Missionary.
  - b. The Field Director or Supervisor who is made aware must:
    - 1) For a repeated or serious breach:
      - a) Issue a written warning copying in the General Director and the Missionary's Sending Church pastor
      - b) Seek to provide counsel to help the person change
    - 2) For any further breach, arrange a meeting with the Missionary and the General Director or President and the Missionary's Sending Church pastor. At this meeting, discussions will be held as to how to help the Missionary, and warnings will be given that any subsequent breach of policy could result in dismissal from VBM.
    - 3) For any subsequent breach, arrange a meeting with the entire Executive Team, the Missionary and the Missionary's Sending Church pastor to examine whether the Missionary should be dismissed from VBM. Following the meeting, the Executive Team will meet to discuss their conclusions and vote on whether the

Missionary should be dismissed or what other courses of action should be taken.

- 4) Make notes of all actions taken and meetings held throughout this process.

## **2. For a Criminal Activity or a Criminal Breach of Policy:**

- a. The VBM Missionary who has reasonable grounds to suspect such actions must:
  - 1) Immediately report all suspected criminal activity, including suspected child abuse, to the appropriate authorities.
  - 2) Inform the Missionary's Field Director or Supervisor to discuss options for confronting the Missionary who is suspected of the action.
- b. The Field Director or Supervisor who is made aware must:
  - 1) Immediately report all suspected criminal activity to the appropriate authorities if this has not already been done.
  - 2) Hold an emergency meeting with the Missionary, the Missionary's Sending Church pastor, and the General Director or President to suspend the Missionary from all ministry and/or leadership roles until after the allegation, accusations, or offense has been thoroughly investigated. At this meeting, discussions will be held as to how to help the Missionary and his family, and, as applicable, the alleged victim and his or her family.
  - 3) Arrange a meeting with the Executive Team, the Missionary, and the Missionary's Sending Church pastor to discuss the results of the investigation. Following the meeting, the Executive Team will meet to discuss their conclusions and vote on what courses of actions should be taken.
  - 4) Make notes of all actions taken and meetings held throughout this process.

## **3. For Criminal Sexual Activity or a Sexual Breach of Policy:**

- a. The VBM Missionary who has reasonable grounds to suspect such actions must:
  - 1) Immediately report all suspected sexual activity of a criminal nature, including suspected child abuse, to the appropriate authorities.
  - 2) Inform the Missionary's Field Director or Supervisor of any suspected criminal sexual activity, including suspected child abuse, or any sexual breach of policy.
- b. The Field Director or Supervisor who is made aware must:
  - 1) Immediately report all suspected sexual activity of a criminal nature to the appropriate authorities if this has not already been done.
  - 2) Hold an emergency meeting with the Missionary, the Missionary's Sending Church pastor, and the General Director or President to suspend the Missionary from all ministry and/or leadership roles until after the allegation, accusations, or offense has been thoroughly investigated. At this meeting, discussions will be held as to how to help the Missionary and his family, and, as applicable, the alleged victim and his or her family. .
  - 3) Arrange a meeting with the Executive Team, the Missionary, and the Missionary's Sending Church pastor to discuss the results of the investigation. Following the meeting, the Executive Team will meet to discuss their conclusions and vote on what courses of actions should be taken.
  - 4) Make notes of all actions taken and meetings held throughout this process.

## 4.8 Recall

1. Vision Baptist Missions reserves the right to recall any Missionary from the field as part of the processes listed above or at any other point that the Executive Team deems their presence on the field a moral, governmental, or doctrinal problem. If the Executive Team chooses to recall a Missionary, they will seek to inform the Missionary Sending Church pastor as part of the process or as soon as possible after the decision has been made.
2. In the event of an international crisis that might endanger the overseas Missionary and/or his family, VBM, in conjunction with the Missionary's Sending Church pastor, will advise the Missionary to return to the United States. VBM will allow the Missionary to have the final say, provided written permission has been obtained and signed by the Missionary, spouse, Field Director, General Director, and Sending Church pastor, and provided this written permission form includes a statement that the missionary assumes all risk of staying on the field and waives any potential liability the ministry might otherwise incur by the missionary's continued presence on the field. The General Director or President will advise supporting churches of the advice given to the Missionary.

## 4.9 Dismissal

If a Missionary is dismissed:

1. The Missionary's Field Director or Supervisor will inform the Missionary's region or department.
2. The General Director or President will inform the Board of Directors and all VBM Missionaries that the Missionary is no longer with VBM.
3. The General Director or President will also make sure that a letter is sent out to all individuals and churches that support the Missionary, informing them of the Missionary's dismissal.
4. The Home Office will send back support checks the following month unless other arrangements have been approved by the Executive Team.

## **CHAPTER 5: DEPUTATION**

1. **Required Events:** While on deputation, Missionaries must attend VBM Orientation and Marriage Retreat to gain further training and encouragement for their marriage and ministry. The only way Missionaries on deputation will be permitted to miss either event is to get special permission from their pastor.
2. **Departure Interview:** When a Missionary reaches 85% of his support, he must schedule a Departure Interview with the Deputation Director and, if possible, the General Director. Following the Departure Interview, the Deputation Director, General Director, and the Missionary's Field Director will meet to discuss the Missionary's readiness to leave for the field and approve his departure date. The Deputation Director will inform the Missionary of their decision and any steps that must be taken before the

Missionary is approved to leave for the field.

3. **Physical Exam:** Missionaries on deputation must pass a physical exam before leaving for the field. The results must be sent directly to the VBM office, verifying their ability or lack of physical ability to return to the field.
4. **Deputation Location:** Missionaries on deputation are to reside in the vicinity of the Home Office of Vision Baptist Missions. The purpose of this is so that deputation Missionaries can have access to ongoing training, mentoring, and mutual encouragement.

## CHAPTER 6: FINANCES

### 6.1 Missionary Support

1. Missionaries must secure their own support for salary, housing, and ministry, including travel to the field, set-up expenses, and work funds.
2. Missionary salary, housing, and work fund levels will be regulated by the Executive Team with Missionary salaries being reviewed by the Board of Directors annually. Missionary support levels will be adjusted to the field and need.
3. All escrow funds, set-up funds, work funds, and others retained funds must remain in a Vision Baptist Missions account and may not be transferred or requested any earlier than 30 days before spending the money, unless approved by your Field Director or Supervisor. Any interest from these funds will be used by Vision Baptist Missions to help defray the operating costs of the Home Office.
4. No work funds may be invested privately by the individual Missionary or be held in the Missionary's personal accounts for long periods of time unless they have a legitimate reason and gain approval from their Field Director and the General Director or President.
5. Vision Baptist Missions makes every effort to abide by the Revenue Code governing non-profit organizations. All contributions to Vision Baptist Missions become the unconditional property of Vision Baptist Missions. We are committed to honor all designations of donors consistent with VBM policies and revenue laws. As a general rule, funds given to a specified project or missionary will be applied to the project or missionary as designated by the donor out of ethical, not legal, obligation to the donor. If any designation is unacceptable, the donation will be returned.

### 6.2 Deputation Finances

1. **Support Budget:** Before beginning deputation, Missionaries must meet with their Field Director to establish a support budget that provides for salary, housing, and work fund. Missionaries will not be allowed to leave for the field unless they have at least 85% of their support budget.
2. **Deputation Budget:** Before beginning deputation, Missionaries must also meet with the Deputation Director to establish a deputation budget that provides for:
  - a. All living and travel expenses

- b. All required VBM events such as Orientation and Marriage Retreat for married couples and any other optional events
  - c. All special needs or circumstances the Missionary might have
  - d. Support for the Home Office (see section 6.5)
3. **Escrow Fund and Set-up/Furlough Fund Savings:** Any support that comes in above the deputation budget must be used in the following ways:
- a. First, it must be placed into an *Escrow Fund* until it reaches one month's full support (salary, housing, and work fund).
  - b. Then, it must be placed into a *Set-up/Furlough Fund* to be used for travel expenses and set-up expenses on the field until it reaches at least five months' full support OR the target Set-up/Furlough Fund amount if it is more than five months' full support.
  - c. Once a foreign Missionary's Set-up/Furlough Fund is fully funded, any support above the deputation budget must continue to accumulate in the *Escrow Fund* until it reaches at least three months' full support.
  - d. Once a Missionary's Set-up Fund and Escrow Fund are fully funded, any support above the deputation budget must be placed into a *Work Fund* for ministry expenses.
4. **Deputation Length:** Under normal circumstances, Missionaries must raise their support within three years. To help Missionaries raise their support, VBM provides ongoing training for Missionaries on deputation. This training is under the direction of the Deputation Director (see section 3.3).
5. **Support Goals:** Missionaries on deputation must meet the following minimum support goals:
- a. After 1 year of deputation - 25%
  - b. After 2 years of deputation - 60%
  - c. After 3 years of deputation - Leave for the field (with a minimum of 85% support)
6. Missionaries on deputation who fail to meet the above support goals must meet with the Deputation Director, the General Director, and their pastor for an evaluation of their future with VBM. Unless there are extenuating circumstances to justify an extension, Missionaries who fail to meet the above goals will be dismissed.

## 6.3 Field Finances<sup>\*4</sup>

Missionaries will have their support handled in the following way:

1. They will receive a set amount of support for salary, housing, and any recurring ministry expenses as specified in the Missionary Support Agreement.
2. They will have funds retained at VBM each month for the following:
  - a. **Escrow Fund**<sup>5</sup> (minimum \$250 until their Escrow Fund is equal to three months'

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<sup>4</sup> This section will be implemented with each individual missionary over the course of 2022, taking into consideration their personal situation.

<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the Escrow Fund is to cover emergencies that are unexpected, necessary, and urgent (e.g. Death of an immediate member of the family, an emergency medical need, the breakdown of an essential appliance, vehicle, etc). No missionary will be allowed to reduce their Escrow Fund below the amount they

- full support for foreign Missionaries or one month's full support for stateside Missionaries)
- b. **VBM Events Fund** (Regional Conference, Orientation, Marriage Retreat) (minimum \$100/month for married couples or \$50/month for singles)
  - c. **Vacation Fund** (minimum \$100/month for married couples or \$50/month for singles)
  - d. **Set-up/Furlough Fund**<sup>6</sup> (minimum \$100/month for married couples or \$50/month for singles until it reaches at least one month's full support and no more than two month's full support)
3. They agree to invest in a qualifying retirement plan (minimum 15% of personal support [e.g. salary + housing]).
  4. They agree to pay for adequate life insurance and health insurance that covers treatment in their field and in the United States.
  5. They will have all remaining support placed into a work fund that can be solicited via a Funds Request Form for ministry expenses (See the Quarterly Expense Report for details about ministry expense categories.)
  6. In an emergency, the President, General Director, or any Field Director may authorize that funds from a missionary's escrow or work fund be transferred without a Funds Request Form, provided the Missionary completes the form as soon as possible after the emergency.

## 6.4 Furlough Finances\*

1. **Furlough Budget:** Before beginning furlough, Missionaries must meet with their Field Director and, if necessary, the Deputation Director to establish a furlough budget that provides for salary, housing, and work funds.
2. **Furlough Savings:** Any support that comes in above the furlough budget must be used for any of the following:
  - a. A Missionary's Escrow Fund if it is not equal to three months' full support for foreign Missionaries or one month's full support for stateside Missionaries
  - b. A Missionary's Set-up/Furlough Fund if it is not equal to at least one month's full support
  - c. A Missionary's Work Fund for ministry expenses

## 6.5 Support of the Home Office\*

1. VBM is a work of faith. Every ministry and Missionary is maintained by faith, including the Home Office.
2. Support for the Home Office comes through a general fund which is voluntarily supported by designated donations from churches, individuals, organizations, and societies.
3. The general fund will maintain the expenses, salaries of Home Office workers, office supplies, printing, publications, mailing, and other things necessary for the efficiency of

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would need to fly their entire family to the United States in an emergency unless their Sending church approves in writing that they will cover the costs on behalf of the missionary.

<sup>6</sup> Does not apply to Stateside Missionaries.

the work of the Home Office.

4. The Home Office workers will include the bookkeepers, secretaries, and clerical workers and shall be supervised by the Operations Manager and hired by the General Director in accordance with VBM employee policies.
5. The salaries of the Home Office workers will be set by the President and General Director of Vision Baptist Missions and reviewed by the Board of Directors annually.
6. All VBM Missionaries and representatives are encouraged to give by faith a monthly offering to support the Home Office. (It currently costs the Home Office approximately \$3.25/transaction to process a check or transfer for a Missionary. This comes out to about 4% of a missionary's support. Missionaries are encouraged to do their part to cover the cost of processing their support.)

## **6.6 Fund Requests**

1. Missionaries must use the Funds Request Form to request support that has been placed into their work fund or other retained funds.
2. Missionaries must also use the Funds Request Form to make internal transfers to other Missionaries or funds.
3. All fund requests require Field Director approval or approval by the Missionary or director's immediate Supervisor.

## **6.7 Additional Employment\***

1. **Missionaries on deputation** who have not reached their full support may continue to work to supplement their needs if the work does not hinder their ministry or deputation. Any variation on this policy must be approved by the Deputation Director and the Missionary's Sending Church pastor.
2. **Missionaries on the field** must not be engaged in gainful employment unless prior approval is gained from the Missionary's Field Director and Sending Church pastor. Children of Missionaries, who have come of age, may work if it is for their own benefit and permitted by the government of that country.
3. **Missionaries on the field** are not to receive a salary from any of the churches that they establish, though they may be reimbursed for specific expenses and supported as one of the churches' regular Missionaries.
4. **Missionaries on furlough** may engage in work activities, occasional or part-time, such as associate work with his pastor, as a teacher in a Christian school or college, or mission work at the Home Office. Monetary remuneration may be paid to the Missionary in the form of additional support through VBM. Any other type of employment must be approved by the General Director and the Missionary's Sending Church pastor giving careful consideration to the "faith support principle" and avoiding the appearance of evil or covetousness.

## **6.8 Raising Funds and Borrowing Money**

1. **Fundraising Approval:** Missionaries must get approval from their Field Director or Supervisor to raise funds for special projects such as equipment, vehicles, land, buildings, or other needs. The purpose of this is to ensure that funds are raised for

appropriate ministry expenses and will be used according to an approved plan so there is no misappropriation of funds.

2. **Debt:** Missionaries should usually not incur debt on the mission field. Borrowing money to purchase buildings, equipment, or other things may be permitted under certain circumstances, but must be approved by the Missionary's Sending Church pastor, their Field Director, and the General Director.
3. **Personal Needs:** If a possession or a property is purchased for the personal need of a Missionary out of the Missionary's personal support or from funds designated for this personal need, the possession or property will belong to the Missionary.
4. **Ministry Needs Transferred to Nationals\*:** Should money be raised specifically for a particular church/ministry on the field, the possession or property will belong to that church/ministry and remain with that church/ministry when the Missionary leaves. If/when the Missionary leaves and no church/ministry exists and no VBM replacement for that field can be secured in a reasonable amount of time, then the possession or property may be sold and the money be designated by VBM for other mission projects.
5. **Ministry Needs Not Transferred to Nationals:** Should money be raised by a Missionary for a particular ministry under the auspices of VBM (apart from the ministry of a local church or ministry on the field), the possession or property will belong to VBM should the Missionary resign from that ministry or from VBM. VBM will seek a replacement for that ministry. If no replacement can be secured in a reasonable amount of time, the possession or property may be sold and the money be designated by VBM for other mission projects.

## CHAPTER 7: FOREIGN MISSIONS

### 7.1 Term Length\*

1. Apart from the first term (see below), a term on the mission field must be four years with one year off the field for furlough. Any adjustments to a term length must be approved by the Missionary's Field Director.
2. The first term will normally include a minimum of two years on the field under a veteran Missionary approved by the Missionary's Field Director.
  - a. In some cases, Missionaries going to "new fields" where VBM does not have any Missionaries may be asked to initially serve in another country in the region or another country with a similar culture or language to gain ministry experience before arriving on the new field.
  - b. During these first two years, the Missionary must study and learn the language and culture as well as gain ministry experience.
3. The Missionary should then return to the States for a 3-6 month furlough before coming back to the field to start his first full four-year term.

### 7.2 Term Goals

1. Each VBM Missionary must make it his overall goal to establish or help establish indigenous, spiritually healthy, Independent Baptist churches, both in name and doctrine.

2. The following goals are specifically for church-planting Missionaries:
  - a. **First Church Plant:** During the first year of a church-planting Missionary's first four-year term (after language school/cultural adaptation and the 3-6 month furlough), he must start his first church plant. (Occasionally, there will be circumstances where the Missionary will be involved in taking over a church or a ministry from another Missionary or pastor. These are exceptions that must be considered and approved by the Missionary's Field Director.)
  - b. **Second Church Plant:** Each church-planting Missionary must make it his goal to start a second church plant by the end of his second, four-year term.
  - c. **National Pastors:** Each church-planting Missionary must make it his goal to train national pastors to take over the churches he starts.
  - d. If the above goals are not met, the Missionary's Field Director should help the Missionary evaluate the circumstances and, where appropriate, recommend further training to help the Missionary reach these goals.
3. Helps Ministry Missionaries may have other goals set by their Field Director, but their work must still contribute to the overall goal of helping establish indigenous, spiritually healthy, Independent Baptist churches, both in name and doctrine.

### 7.3 Language School\*

1. Missionaries going to a field where the people speak a foreign language must learn the primary language of that country or people group and must attend a language school approved by their Field Director.
2. Missionaries must not quit or change language schools for any reason unless they gain approval from their Field Director or the Missionary who is mentoring them.
3. Missionaries must complete the "Language School Agreement" before beginning language school and abide by the expectations of the agreement throughout their time in Language School.
  - a. Language School Agreement for Married Missionaries
  - b. Language School Agreement for Single Missionaries
4. Missionaries must complete all language studies required by the language school and the mentor Missionary or Field Director.
  - a. At the end of language school, they must complete an outside agency's assessment of their language ability. If they fail to achieve the benchmark set by their Field Director, they must complete remedial language school training as determined by their Field Director.
  - b. If, after remedial language school training, they are unable to achieve the benchmark set by their Field Director, they must consider changing their ministry field from the language they are attempting to learn.
5. Missionaries going to a country that speaks a Missionary's native language must still complete at least one year of cultural adaptation and ministry contextualization approved by their Field Director before starting their first church.

## **CHAPTER 8: STATESIDE MISSIONS**

1. Stateside Missionaries must have the same goal as foreign Missionaries - to establish

or help establish indigenous, spiritually healthy, Independent Baptist churches, both in name and doctrine.

2. Stateside Missionaries must abide by all VBM policies and procedures unless an exemption is specifically stated.
3. Unlike foreign Missionaries, stateside Missionaries will not normally take a year's furlough every four years.
  - a. Instead, they should have normal periods of vacation each year and get their churches ready to be independent through "planned absences" or planting other churches.
  - b. In the event that an extended period of time is needed (usually between church-planting works) for traveling to report to their supporters and raise additional support, stateside Missionaries may be permitted to do so if they gain permission from their Sending Church pastor and Field Director.
4. Stateside Missionaries shall continue to be a member of their Sending Church unless intending to stay and pastor the church they start and give up their Missionary support. When organizing the new church, stateside Missionaries may show their support for the new church by signing any "charter" document as "Missionary" or "church-planter" but not as a member.

## CHAPTER 9: HELPS MINISTRIES

1. The purpose of any Helps Ministry through Vision Baptist Missions must be to assist in the goal of establishing indigenous, spiritually healthy, Independent Baptist churches, both in name and doctrine.
2. Helps Ministries through Vision Baptist Missions may be one of the following:
  - a. **Teaching:** Bible colleges, schools for Missionary children, schools for national children, teaching women, camp work, etc.
  - b. **Literature:** printing, preparing Bible lessons and training material, etc.
  - c. **Representatives:** Voice in the Villages representatives, Regional representatives
3. Before being accepted as a Missionary, a Helps Ministry Missionary must have his ministry approved by the Executive Team. Each Helps Ministry Missionary must demonstrate why his ministry is necessary instead of having a local person on the mission field do the ministry.
4. Each Helps Ministry must be directly accountable to a church-planting Missionary on the field that is assigned to them by their Field Director.

## CHAPTER 10: FURLOUGH\*

### 10.1 Furlough Length

1. The purpose of furlough is to allow Missionaries and their family to rest, refocus, reconnect with family, report to their supporters, raise up more laborers for world evangelism, and raise any additional support they may need for their next term.
2. With the exception of the 3-6 month furlough that Missionaries normally take after their

first two years on the field in language school (see section 7.3), furlough should normally be one year in length. Any adjustments to furlough length beyond an extra month less or more than a year must be approved by the Missionary's Field Director and the General Director. Single Missionaries serving in a Helps Ministry may choose to follow a different furlough pattern (see section 10.3). Stateside Missionaries may also have a different furlough pattern (see chapter 9.)

3. While on furlough, Missionaries must reside in the vicinity of their Sending Church or the Home Office of Vision Baptist Missions. If Missionaries choose to live somewhere else while on furlough, they must gain permission from their Sending Church pastor and let the President and/or General Director know where they will be based.
4. While on furlough, Missionaries must attend VBM Orientation and Marriage Retreat to gain further training and encouragement for their marriage and ministry. The only way Missionaries on furlough will be permitted to miss either event is to get special permission from their Sending Church pastor.
5. Before leaving the field for furlough or for any international travel, Missionaries must notify their Field Director using the Furlough Notification Form.

## **10.2 Emergency Trips**

1. Missionaries must remain on the field for a full term unless given special permission by their Field Director and Sending Church pastor to return home before furlough.
2. Missionaries may return home in the case of death (or serious illness) of someone in their immediate family (e.g., parents, grandparents, siblings, children, grandchildren, etc.).
  - a. Missionaries are encouraged to discuss and make plans in advance of what deaths or serious illnesses might cause them to make an emergency trip.
  - b. Due to the cost of international travel, Missionary families should also carefully evaluate whether all members of the family need to travel back or just one or two members.
  - c. Missionaries must assume the financial responsibility for emergency trips and may use their Escrow Fund for these trips. If escrow funds are used, the funds must be replenished as soon as possible.
3. VBM will make every effort to bring VBM Missionaries out of any country where their lives may be endangered by an emergency or crisis.
  - a. Every Missionary should take into consideration the possibility of danger when they go to their field. VBM will seek to advise Missionaries about what to do, but the final decision to leave the field, in view of immediate danger, will be left to the discretion of the Missionary and their Sending Church pastor. There should be consultation with the leadership of VBM.
  - b. VBM does not negotiate with those who take hostages and will not pay ransom demands.
  - c. See Chapter 15 for more information about crisis situations.

## **10.3 Yearly Visits for Single Missionaries**

1. Single Missionaries, both male and female, are approved to return to the States each year for either the VBM camp or the VBM summit to enable them to participate in these events and to enable them to have the chance to meet a possible spouse if they believe that God might want them to get married.
2. The length and details of these visits to the States must be approved by the Missionary's Field Director and Sending Church pastor.
3. Single Missionaries may also use these yearly visits as a replacement for their normal furlough provided the amount of time they spend in the United States after language school and their first 3-6 month furlough is equivalent to 11-13 months out of a five year period (compare with section 9.2).

## **10.4 Debrief Meeting**

1. Within the first 45 days of returning from the mission field, the Missionary must meet with the President and/or the General Director for a Debrief Meeting at the Home Office.
2. The President and/or General Director should include the Missionary's Field Director in this meeting either in person or over a conference call.
3. With the Missionary's permission, the President and/or General Director may also include other members of VBM Leadership in this Debrief Meeting.
4. The Debrief Meeting will consist of discussing the Missionary's response on the Debrief Interview Form along with any other issues, concerns, or suggestions from the Missionary, the Missionary's Field Director, the General Director or the President.
5. Training, counseling, and/or support may be recommended to the Missionary and his family as a result of this meeting.
6. Details of the Debrief Meeting may be shared with the Missionary's Sending Church pastor if the President and/or General Director feel it is necessary and appropriate.

## **10.5 Relaunch Meeting**

1. Within 60 days of returning to the mission field, the Missionary must meet with the President and/or General Director for a Relaunch Meeting at the Home Office.
2. The President and/or General Director should include the Missionary's Field Director in this meeting either in person or over a conference call.
3. With the Missionary's permission, the President and/or General Director may also include other members of VBM Leadership in this Relaunch Meeting.
4. The Relaunch Meeting will consist of discussing and documenting progress made on furlough, the Missionary's plans and objectives for their next term, as well as any other issues, concerns, or suggestions from the Missionary, the Missionary's Field Director, the General Director or the President.
5. Further advice/support may be given to the Missionary and his family at this time and recommendations may be given about a Missionary's readiness to return to the field.
6. Details of the Relaunch Meeting may be shared with the Missionary's Sending Church pastor if the President and/or General Director feel it is necessary and appropriate.

## 10.6 Furlough Physical

1. Missionaries on furlough must complete a physical exam before returning to the field.
2. The results must be sent directly to the VBM office, verifying their ability or lack of physical ability to return to the field.

# CHAPTER 11: MINISTRY CHANGE

## 11.1 Field Change

1. **Field Change:** Any Missionary desiring to change fields must arrange an in-person meeting at the Home Office or a conference call with his Sending Church pastor, Field Director, and the General Director. At this meeting, the Missionary must present his reasons for the field change.
2. **Internal Move:** Any Missionary desiring to move locations within a country must consult with his Sending Church pastor and Field Director before making this move.

## 11.2 Sending Church Change

1. All Missionaries with Vision Baptist Missions must remain a member of an Independent Baptist church that:
  - a. Is in agreement with the doctrinal beliefs of Vision Baptist Missions.
  - b. Is willing to act as the Sending Church for the Missionary and hold them accountable to carry out their ministry with integrity, wisdom, and doctrinal purity.
  - c. Is supportive of the core values, policies, and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions and is willing to delegate some oversight of their Missionary to Vision Baptist Missions within the parameters of the policies and procedures of Vision Baptist Missions.
2. Any Missionary who changes their Sending Church while a Missionary with Vision Baptist Missions must follow the following procedure:
  - a. Notify their Field Director and the General Director of their intention to change Sending Churches.
  - b. Present the following to the General Director:
    - 1) A letter to the General Director from the pastor of their current Sending Church affirming that they are in good standing, along with contact details for their current pastor or leadership.
    - 2) A letter from the pastor of their prospective Sending Church affirming that they intend to receive you into their membership and are in agreement with the requirements of the first part of this section (11.2 Sending Church Change).
  - c. The General Director will inform the Missionary if there are any conflicts with the policies in this Handbook for the Missionary to change Sending Churches.
3. Any Missionary who changes their Sending Church must notify all of their supporting churches in their next prayer letter after the change has been made.

## 11.3 Resignation

1. **Resignation Letter:** Once a Missionary has communicated his intention to resign from VBM, either verbally or in written form, the Missionary must send his resignation letter to either his Field Director or the General Director within one week.
2. **Letter to Supporters:** One week from communicating his intention to resign from VBM, the General Director or President must make sure that a letter is sent out to all individuals and churches that support the Missionary informing them of the Missionary's resignation.
3. **Processing Support:** Vision Baptist Missions will handle the Missionary's finances for thirty days, after which all funds will be returned to their donors. Vision Baptist Mission reserves the right to reduce the amount of time they handle a Missionary's finances after resignation.
4. **Property on the Mission Field:** All properties on the mission field purchased with personal or ministries funds will be dealt with according to section 6.8.
5. **Retained Funds:** Escrow funds up to three month's full support will belong to the missionary. Any excess escrow funds or retained funds will be sent back to their original donors or, in the event this cannot be accurately calculated, will be sent back to a missionary's active<sup>7</sup> supporters at a rate based on the percentage of how much they contributed to the missionary's overall support. Because of the complicated nature of these calculations, some of the retained funds will be used to pay staff to implement this process.
6. **Work Funds:**
  - a. If a missionary communicates his intention to resign and does not communicate that he is joining another qualifying missions organization (see 11.3.7 below) he must do the following with any remaining work funds:
    - 1) Use them according to their original designation within 30 days of his resignation.
    - 2) Transfer them to the work fund of another VBM missionary who is working in the same country with the same ministry focus.
  - b. Any unused work funds will be sent back to the missionary's active supporters at a rate based on the percentage of how much they contributed to the missionary's overall support. Because of the complicated nature of these calculations, some of the work fund will be used to pay staff to handle these calculations.
7. **Transfer of Funds to Other Qualifying Missions Organizations:**
  - a. If a Missionary resigns from VBM to join another qualifying missions organization, VBM will only transfer funds designated for the missionary to their new missions organization if the following things are true:
    - 1) The missionary is continuing to serve in the same country/ministry with the same ministry focus and same doctrinal beliefs.
    - 2) The missions organization is an independent Baptist missions organization of like faith and practice as VBM.
    - 3) The missions organization has similar accountability and internal controls in place as VBM.

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<sup>7</sup> Active supporters are those who have contributed consistently over the last twelve months.

- b. If the missions organization does not meet the above qualifications, then any unused work funds will be sent back to the missionary's active supporters at a rate based on the percentage of how much they contributed to the missionary's overall support. Because of the complicated nature of these calculations, some of the work fund will be used to pay staff to handle these calculations.

## **11.4 Retirement\***

1. All VBM Missionaries are required to invest in a qualifying retirement fund that will be able to support them in their retirement.
2. Missionaries who have served with distinction for at least 25 years may be honored with the title "Missionary Emeritus" and encouraged to represent and promote the work of VBM as they are able.
3. The Home Office will not normally continue to handle support for retired Missionaries, but exceptions will be made for those Missionaries with "Missionary Emeritus" status who do not have a sufficient retirement.

## **CHAPTER 12: COMMUNICATION**

1. **Prayer Letters:** Prayer letters must be sent to the Sending Church, Home Office, Field Director, and supporting churches at a minimum of one time per quarter.
2. **Field Director Visits:** Periodic surveys of the Missionary's field and work will be made by the Missionary's Field Director or Supervisor to keep communications and continuity established and also to encourage and assist the Missionary in his needs.

## **CHAPTER 13: GRIEVANCES**

1. Any VBM Missionary with a complaint or grievance must first seek to resolve the issue with his Field Director or Supervisor. Complaints that are not able to be resolved with a person's Field Director or Supervisor must be passed up the administrative chain of command.
2. Any VBM Missionary who is not able to resolve a complaint within the normal administrative structure of VBM must then bring his grievance to his pastor and/or Sending Church to help facilitate discussions regarding the grievance.
3. Any VBM Missionary who is not able to resolve a complaint within the normal administrative structure of VBM or through the help of his pastor and/or Sending Church may file a written grievance with the Chairman of the VBM Pastoral Advisory Committee (PAC).
4. The PAC Chairman should receive the written grievance and put together an Appeals Committee to review the written grievance. The Appeals Committee should include at least three pastors from the Pastoral Advisory Committee.
5. The Appeals Committee should investigate all grievances and seek to advise both parties.

6. The rights and duties of all parties, including Missionaries and all other parties, shall be interpreted according to the laws of the State of Georgia and the Bible. The venue for any dispute will be at or near the Home Office of Vision Baptist Missions.
7. All parties agree that any dispute or claim arising from this process shall be settled by this Grievance Policy or if necessary and requested by legally binding arbitration, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation. All parties waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

## CHAPTER 14: MISCELLANEOUS\*

1. **Single Missionaries Who Get Married:** When a non-married Missionary becomes engaged to be married, he or she must contact VBM and make arrangements to appear with his or her fiancée for an interview. If the single Missionary candidate is already engaged to be married at the time of applying to VBM, he or she must bring their fiancée to the interview. For the Missionary to remain a Missionary with VBM, the Missionary's fiancée must meet the Missionary requirements of VBM (see chapter 4).
2. **Church Membership on the Field:** A Missionary must not become a member of a church on the field. To do so would result in losing his Sending Church authority and negate his Missionary status. The only exception will be in a country that has government regulations requiring church membership, and then only if approved by the Missionary's Sending Church pastor and his Field Director.
3. **Pastoring on the Field:** If a Missionary goes to the field, either stateside or foreign, as a church-planting Missionary, he is not to accept an official call as a permanent pastor unless he intends to give up his support and become the permanent pastor of the church. To do otherwise would change his status to a local pastor, and the primary goal of our Missionaries should be to establish or help establish indigenous churches and train or help train national leaders to lead those churches.

## CHAPTER 15: CRISIS SUPPORT STATEMENT

Realizing Missionaries serve in a world that is increasingly subject to acts of violence, our responsibility as a mission board is to make adequate preparation to deal with such an eventuality, should it arise.

VBM recognizes the sovereign power of God to work out His purposes even in such a situation as this, and we, therefore, affirm our full trust in Him and reliance upon the wisdom and direction of the Holy Spirit in seeking a resolution of any crisis. Furthermore, we recognize the importance and the encouragement of mutual support of the Sending Church and supporting churches.

## **15.1 Definition of a Crisis Situation**

For the purpose of this policy, a crisis situation shall include all cases where any VBM Missionary or an immediate family member is threatened with or suffers serious physical or mental harm, where any ministry property suffers or is likely to suffer substantial damage, or where the continuation of a VBM ministry in a particular location is threatened.

VBM recognizes the difference between those crisis situations that develop in stages (such as political or economic crisis, civil unrest or violence, war or international tension) and crisis situations which happen unexpectedly (such as a terrorist attack, coup d'état, natural disasters, imprisonment, kidnapping, etc.). In the first case, problems should be anticipated by leadership and contingency plans developed so that members are not subjected to panic situations. In the second case, where no prior planning is possible, the mission must have the ability to act quickly to provide appropriate guidance and assistance.

## **15.2 Basic Procedures in the Event of a Crisis Situation**

1. The crisis is to be reported to the Sending Church Pastor, Field Director, and where appropriate, the relevant Embassy/Consulate.
2. The Field Director will notify the General Director and the supporting Churches (when possible) immediately and communicate subsequent developments to them.
3. The General Director will authorize the formation of a Crisis Support Team (CST) if appropriate.
4. The General Director, in conjunction with the Sending Church, will prepare or approve an initial statement suitable for and in the form of a press release if appropriate. No person in VBM is to use wording other than the approved wording of the release.
5. The General Director, as appropriate, will send out follow-up statements. In cases where a Crisis Support Team has been formed, only statements which have been approved by the Leader of the Crisis Support Team will be issued.
6. A final Full report will be prepared by the Crisis Support Team Leader or Field Director and distributed to the Sending Church pastor and General Director.
7. On the basis of the Full Report, and if necessary, the General Director may prepare a full and final statement to be released for publication through appropriate channels.

The General Director, in assessment of the following circumstances, will approve of a Crisis Support Team:

1. When the crisis is likely to be extended in time and to demand an abnormal commitment or amount of resources.
2. When the actual or potential consequences of the crisis threaten life or the continued ministry of VBM in a particular area.

## **15.3 Crisis Support Team Membership**

Membership of the CST will normally consist of the following:

1. A Leader within VBM Home Office Staff (CST Leader)
2. The Field Director

3. A Sending Church Leader, if appropriate and possible.
4. A representative of the national church in the crisis area, if appropriate and possible.

In a case where a crisis victim is a member of the immediate family of any person who would normally serve on the CST, that CST member will be replaced by another person nominated by the CST Leader or the General Director.

The CST will have the power to co-opt additional members and call in outside resource people as appropriate to the situation.

If possible, the CST will assemble at a location as close to the scene of the crisis as possible while still maintaining reliable communications. Members assigned to the team are to be relieved of their normal responsibilities. VBM realizes the expense of a Crisis Support Team; therefore, VBM will endeavor to establish a Crisis Support Fund solicited from all supporting churches. Upon establishment of a CST, all other members and staff of the Mission shall refer all information, suggestions, or other data relating to the crisis to the CST. All members of VBM are to refrain from taking any steps or conducting any actions relating to the crisis without specific direction from the CST Leader.

## **15.4 Crisis Support Team Authority**

The CST is responsible for handling all aspects of resolution of the crisis. This may include protection for members and their families, protection of facilities, information gathering, negotiations, coordination and assignment of resources, press and government relations, and both internal and external communications regarding the crisis and its resolution.

The CST will appoint a Negotiator where necessary. The Negotiator will not be a member of the CST, but will act in an advisory capacity to the CST.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the CST will act with authority of Vision Baptist Missions and will endeavor at all times to maintain consultation with the General Director and President of VBM.

## **15.5 Kidnapping/Hostage-Taking**

In the event of a hostage situation, the interests of the hostage and his family will be jointly considered in light of the primary objective of gaining the release of the hostage at the earliest possible time with the least disruption to his/her life and the life of the family.

## **15.6 Communications with the Home Country Embassy/Consulate**

Upon arrival in the country of service, VBM Missionaries will register their names, address, and telephone numbers with their Home Country Embassy or local Consulate office.

In the event of a crisis, VBM Missionaries should communicate directly with their Embassy or Consulate office for advisory information.

## **15.7 Outgoing Communication During a Crisis**

During a crisis, all information to be released concerning the crisis will first have the approval of the CST. No member of VBM (other than those specifically designated by the General Director or CST Leader) is authorized to make any statement or comment, which relates in any way to an ongoing crisis. All press inquiries within the United States shall be referred to the General Director, who may serve as the spokesperson for the CST and/or may direct the inquiry directly to the CST.

## **15.8 Evacuation**

The decision to evacuate a particular area shall be made by the General Director in consultation with their Sending Church pastor and appropriate Field Director. If the emergency is sudden and normal communication with their Pastor or Directors is not possible, the decision to evacuate may be made by the individual Missionary, if it is felt that there is a serious threat to his/her safety.

Evacuation should always be cautious and deliberate. Personal safety is of utmost concern for the Missionary and his family. At first, removal should be to other places of safety closest to their base of operation, if possible.

## **15.9 Evacuation Priority**

1. First Priority
  - a. Mothers and Children (fathers too unless in an essential role)
  - b. Those with special medical care needs
  - c. Those unable to cope emotionally
  - d. Those specifically targeted for harassment
  - e. Those living in zones considered most dangerous
2. Second Priority
  - a. Those with a strong personal preference to withdraw
  - b. Those close to completing their term
  - c. Those who with minimum disruption can continue their work elsewhere (i.e., language study)
  - d. Those who, if cut off from other Missionaries, are likely to flounder (i.e., trying to communicate in the national language)
  - e. Those rendered ineffective or inoperative
3. Third Priority
  - a. Those with restricted resident permits
  - b. Those in some major leadership role
  - c. Those involved in work perceived as essential (i.e., medical work)
  - d. Those veteran Missionaries who give adequate reason to stay
  - e. Those located in areas perceived too dangerous to withdraw

VBM recognizes the extreme anxiety experienced by abducted persons and the equally extreme anguish caused to the next of kin in the event of kidnapping and the demand for ransom.

The host government should be informed immediately of any kidnapping/hostage-taking because it bears the responsibility for the safety of expatriates. The rights of citizenship of the abducted person(s) should be exercised in seeking the help of their respective governments.

## **15.10 Ransom and Extortion**

It is the policy of VBM that as a matter of principle no sums of money by way of ransom or other forms of extortion will be paid. When possible, attempts will be made to obtain the release of the victims by reasoning with the kidnappers. However, it is not always possible or desirable to establish such direct links between a mission and kidnappers; therefore, non-mission mediators may be utilized.

## **15.11 Families of Hostages**

In the event of a hostage seizure, the family of the hostage will be moved immediately to a safe location as determined by the Field Director. The CST will review the situation immediately when it convenes and recommend further action, including evacuation to the family's home country for emotional support if advisable, but only as a last resort.

From the time a crisis commences, a VBM member will be assigned to work with the hostage's immediate family on a regular basis until final resolution of the crisis. This member will obtain official news and information for the family, ensure that physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are being met, and take whatever steps are possible to minimize the stress and consequences of the crisis family.

VBM will assure the extended family of their concern and of the practical steps being taken to secure release and will exercise a spiritual ministry, as opportunity affords, to anxious relatives.

## **15.12 Crisis Counseling**

It is recognized that all crisis situations will give rise to the need for adequate counseling and aftercare of those involved. The CST will evaluate the need for counseling and then arrange for all Missionaries who are directly involved in a crisis to receive counseling from a qualified counselor. These evaluations will be carried out immediately following a crisis and no more than three months later. The cost of these evaluations and any necessary treatment will be handled in such a way as not to impose a financial burden on the persons involved.

## **15.13 Imprisonment**

In the event of imprisonment, VBM will follow, where appropriate, the same principles for action as a person who has been kidnapped or taken hostage. VBM will find appropriate means to urge the host government to determine the reasons for imprisonment and what can be done to secure a release. In addition, VBM will work closely with the appropriate Embassies to apply all legitimate pressure possible, unless this would negatively affect the possibility of release or the future proclamation of the Gospel.

## **15.14 Guidelines for Evacuation**

1. If a perceived emergency situation arises, liaisons with VBM leadership and the Home Country Embassy/Consulate will be established.
2. In some areas of the world, it would be wise to have a suitcase ready with necessities (including rations, baby food, etc.). Maintain an evacuation list of important things to take if you had to evacuate at a moment's notice. Remember your weight allowance for baggage.
3. Make sure all travel documents are in order (e.g., up-to-date visa and passport).
4. Make sure advance arrangements are made for ticket payment for emergencies. Some possible options to be considered:
  - a. Have a US dollar account on which checks can be drawn.
  - b. Have a major credit card valid for purchasing airline tickets.
  - c. Have a written agreement with a local airline office.
  - d. Keep extra cash on hand.
5. All property titles and legal documents with insurance policies should be copied and other originals kept in locked, fireproof containers, preferably in a bank deposit box, the copies to be sent to VBM Home Office for safe custody.
6. All evaluations of property should be kept up-to-date, copied, and handled as above.
7. Records of funds should be handled as above and some cash kept for emergencies.
8. Arrangements should be made with other expatriates or nationals to assume title to personal property that cannot be evacuated quickly and easily.
9. If evacuation is necessary, notify your Pastor and Field Director of your plans as soon as possible.
10. Determine the safest and most direct route of transportation. Try not to let emotional reactions lead you to unnecessary radical action (e.g., boarding the first plane departing which would take you far away from your primary destination.)
11. Where practical and possible, keep VBM leadership informed while en route or immediately upon arrival at your destination.

## **15.15 Evacuation Preparations**

1. Spiritual
  - a. Major emphasis should be placed upon effecting an emergency evacuation in such a way that it will bear strong testimony to our deep love and concern for the spiritual welfare of those being left behind, especially those of the household of faith.

- b. Every possible effort should be made so that it will not appear as though we are more concerned with saving our lives and possessions than we are in the immediate needs and future security of the national Christian.
  - c. We should remember that there is a Biblical precedent for evacuation (Acts 8:1-5), especially as a part of God's plan to spread the Gospel. So we should be alert to nearby opportunities for alternative ministries.
2. Physical
- a. Have a location arranged to receive your family in a nearby country. The embassy's advice should be carefully considered in the case of serious emergencies.
  - b. Evacuation action should be taken rather than risk internment.
  - c. The Field Director shall be kept fully informed of the movements of Missionaries and their families when taking vacations and extended trips.

### **15.16 Assent by VBM Missionaries**

When applying with VBM, all VBM Missionaries are required to sign an application stating that they have studied this Crisis Support Statement and agree to fully comply with all its provisions.

## **CHAPTER 16: REVISIONS**

This Handbook is intended to be periodically reviewed and refined as deemed necessary by the VBM Board, President, and Executive Team. The organization of the mission is the responsibility of the President who answers to the Board for his leadership and the structure of all Vision Baptist Missions teams and departments. A review of this Handbook shall be conducted at least every five years with involvement by the Executive Team, a representative group of missionaries, and representatives of the Board.

Any missionary, administrator, or Board member may propose a change to the Handbook which shall be considered at the next review. Proposals must be submitted in writing to the President or General Director of Vision Baptist Missions. All changes to this Missionary Handbook must be approved by a majority vote of the Executive. In the event, there are equal votes for and against a proposal, the President will be given a casting (extra) vote.