



Presented to the church family of Vision
Baptist Church on March 31st, 2013.

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as of March 31st, 2013

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Introduction

*5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: **whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:** 7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.*

3 John 5-8

Vision Baptist Church desires to be a church that sends our missionaries out "after a godly sort." They are going forth for Jesus' name. They are going out to champion the name of God in places where God's name is unknown or horribly neglected. If we love God's glory and His name, then we will love to see the fame of His name spread to every unreached people. And those who go out from us for the sake of the Name will therefore be, seriously, and substantially supported by those of us who stay behind. For we who are staying behind are also staying for the sake of the Name--not for the sake of comfort or convenience or money or any private ambitions. To that end, the World Evangelism Committee requires that all missionaries, both short-term (six months or more) and career, have a Vision-based Yokefellow Team. In this way we hope to more fully meet the needs of our missionaries and to be active fellow workers with them in the truth.

Team Structure

Various Yokefellow Teams will organize themselves differently, depending on the gifts of the individuals involved. Many support teams will find it helpful to have the following roles assigned to various people on the team, leaving other members of the team open to volunteer for other specific, occasional duties.

- Vision Contact Person. If Vision needs information about a missionary, or if they need to request a Yokefellow Teams' involvement in Vision activities (Powerpoint announcements, missionary monthly displays, missions announcements for the VisionCast, etc.) they will contact this individual on the missionaries' Yokefellow Team.
- Meeting Facilitator. This individual will be responsible to call meetings to order, keep meetings focused on the missionary and help the team's discussion to keep moving.
- Team Organizer. Many Yokefellow Teams will find it helpful to have someone on the team organize a number of details that will assist the team to better support their missionary. These include keeping track of missionary prayer requests and answers, keeping track of money given by team members for gifts, making up a calendar of team member letter writing assignments, etc.
- Communication Person. In case of emergency, it may be helpful for the Yokefellow Team to be organized into an information chain with a contact person at the head of the list. If anyone on the team hears of an emergency that their missionary is facing, they should contact that individual so that information can be passed on quickly and accurately.

What is a Yokefellow?

WHAT IS A YOKEFELLOW?

*And I intreat thee also, **true yokefellow**, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.*

Philippians 4:3

The name "yokefellow" comes from the reference in **Philippians 4:3** and speaks of someone who is in the work with you, a person who is pulling the same load you are. Epaphroditus, Silas, Timothy and Barnabas were all yokefellows of Paul. They were fellow laborers. Barnabas illustrates a true yokefellow as described in **Acts 9:27; 11:22-26**. His name literally means "Son of Consolation" It was Barnabas who was Paul's advocate before the church after Paul's conversion. He was a partner in ministry. He was also John Mark's advocate when Paul wanted to leave him behind. (**Acts 15:37-39**) Barnabas was the kind of partner in ministry that everyone would want on their team.

A Yokefellow Team is a small group (six-twelve) of committed people who come together to care for their missionary in a variety of ways, striving to help meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. It is a group of people with whom the missionary can be open and honest, allowing them to see his needs, and share his successes and defeats.

WHY HAVE A YOKEFELLOW TEAM?

Because Yokefellow Teams help to make our missionaries feel cared for and understood, and by providing them with a committed group of people who will be in prayer for them regularly, showing them practical love, helping to keep them visible before the rest of the Vision family and strengthened on the mission field.

Why have teams?

WHAT DOES A YOKEFELLOW TEAM DO?

In a nutshell, a Yokefellow Team works together to care for their missionary, striving to meet their spiritual, physical and emotional needs. To a large extent this will happen only to the degree that the missionary is willing and able to make his needs known to the team.

The specific ways in which a Yokefellow Team goes about meeting their missionaries' needs will vary depending on the specific personality and needs of the missionary, as well as the personality of the support team. Ask your missionary how you can best assist him; learn from the example of other teams; be creative; pray about it. This doesn't mean that the Yokefellow Team does everything but they do take personal responsibility to serve as that missionary's advocate at Vision.

How are teams formed?

HOW ARE YOKEFELLOW TEAMS FORMED?

Members of a Yokefellow Team are prayerfully chosen by the individual missionary. Some missionaries ask friends from their small groups, Sunday School classes, choir, various ministry involvements, etc. to come together to form their Yokefellow Team. Everyone on the team does not have to be from Vision, but the majority should and the designated leader must be. The key for the missionary is to choose people with whom they have already established a level of trust and with whom they can be "real".

WHY DOES VISION REQUIRE YOKEFELLOW TEAMS?

Missionaries don't go out for adventure, they don't go out for material profit, they don't go out for prestige, nor do they go out merely for humanitarian purposes. They go out for the sake of the Name! (**3 John 5-8**). We want the missionaries that we financially support to deeply feel that they are genuinely cared for, that they are more than just names on the back of our worship folders, or that they are more than just line items in our budget.

Vision doesn't just want to "have" missionaries, but we want to "send" missionaries in a manner worthy of the Name. How can this happen? The World Evangelism Committee is responsible for 30+ staff missionaries and strategic partners and many more in the Our Generation Training Program. The missions staff cannot really "care" for all these people. The handful of people on the WEC cannot make this massive task happen either.

When they go.

PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR CARING FOR YOUR MISSIONARY BEFORE THEY GO

- Ask them PERSONALLY what their needs are (materially and spiritually) and pray earnestly for them.
- Help them to find information about the country they are going to and the people they will be working among through online searches.
- Be available for them. Encourage them as their emotions vary just before they go.
- Help them find information on needed equipment by reading Consumer Report articles, discussing with others, etc.
- Ask them about what they are learning as God takes them down the path that will lead them to a foreign country.
- Help them to get all the supplies that they need to take with them overseas. You can help them by running errands or offering to take care of their children so that they can more easily run errands.
- Mail out their prayer letters.
- Drop dinner off at their house their last few nights so that they can concentrate on accomplishing those last few tasks.
- Offer to have them stay with you if they need a place just before they leave.
- Help them pack the items they'll store here in the U.S. as well as the items they'll take with them or ship.
- Treat them to something special just before they go.
- Take them to the airport as a team and have a send-off there.
- Have an open house or "Informal Commissioning" service for them before they leave so they can pray with and say good-bye to many of their friends.
- Host a reception for them at Vision after their Sunday morning church commissioning.
- Write an article for the church blog and bulletin, letting the church know what your missionaries are up to and how to pray for them.

While they are gone.

WHILE THEY ARE GONE

- Pray earnestly for them.
- Write to your missionary often.
- Keep up to date with what your missionary is doing so that you can encourage them in the work and share their work with the Vision family.
- Remember their birthdays, holidays, and other special days with a card, gift, or telephone call.
- Write an article for the church blog and bulletin to update the Vision family.
- Send an email or package, if possible, to them occasionally so that they have current, up-to-date information on their team.
- Pass on any special prayer requests to the church office so that the pastoral staff knows how to pray and so that it can be shared during the regularly scheduled Vision prayer meeting times.
- Send fun "care packages" occasionally to encourage your missionary or to help meet some of their needs.
- Send your missionary links Vision's online sermon website so that they can continue to learn from the church and feel more a part of the body (send the complete worship service!).
- Send your missionary articles of special interest out of the newspaper or magazines.
- Give your missionary an online subscription to a magazine like Time or Newsweek so that they can keep up with what is happening in the U.S.
- Consider visiting your missionary on the field.

When they return.

When they return

- Pray earnestly for them.
- Be at the airport to welcome them back home.
- Host an open house so that they can see many of their friends and update them.
- Help them to organize a time at VISION where they can show their video and update the body.
- Praise the Lord with them for how God used them overseas.
- Mail out their prayer letters.
- Be available to help them readjust to life in the U.S.
- Have housing ready for them when they arrive home.
- Have a few groceries for them in their refrigerator and cupboards so that they don't have to go shopping right away.
- Help them to find a car to borrow during their furlough time.
- Give them a special night out or some other special treat.
- Help them to catch up with what is current, what's in and what's out.
- Bring dinner by their house for the first few days.
- Introduce them to new people at Vision.
- Help them to get caught up on the latest happenings here at Vision.
- Listen to them, be available.
- Give them space.
- A month before they come back begin keeping a calendar for them,

If you have any questions concerning the
Yokefellow Ministry please
contact Jeff Bush, our missions pastor.

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