



missions exists

nurtureprogram handbook



Bethlehem Baptist Church Global Outreach 2016 edition

because worship doesn't

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
1 Purpose of the Nurture Program	4
Missionary Attrition and Retention: The need for the Nurture Program	4
Description of Nurture Program	6
2 Types of Involvement in Global Outreach	7
Sender and Short-Term.....	7
Career Global Partner.....	7
3 Structure of the Nurture Program.....	10
Level 1	11
Level 2	14
Level 3	18
4 Concluding Remarks	20
Appendix 1: Nurture Program Component Checklist.....	21
Appendix 2: Nurture Program Overview Diagram	23
Appendix 3: Nurture Program Level 1 Application.....	24
Appendix 4: Nurture Program Level 2 Application.....	26
Appendix 5: Nurture Program Level 3 Application	29
Appendix 6: Cross-Cultural Relationship Component	33
Appendix 7: Biblical Values in Contextualization.....	35
Appendix 8: BBC Covenant	43
Appendix 9: BBC Congregational Affirmation of Faith	44
Appendix 10: Qualifications for Elders and Deacons	47
Appendix 11: Barnabas Teams	48
Appendix 12: Evaluating Missions Agencies	54

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions.

-John Piper, Let the Nations be Glad!

1 Purpose of the Nurture Program

The purpose of the Nurture Program is to prepare cross-cultural ministers with the basic knowledge, character, and skills required for effective service, in the context of their sending church, so that we (Bethlehem Baptist Church) can recognize and affirm the Holy Spirit's calling on their life (Acts 13:1-3), and fulfill our responsibility as their "senders" (3 John vs. 6).

Missionary Attrition and Retention: The need for the Nurture Program

One key reason that Bethlehem has developed the Nurture Program is the danger of missionary attrition. Over the years the evangelical church has seen more and more missionaries leave the field and cut short a career in missions. One of the key reasons why missionaries leave the field is due to a lack of training and equipping.

Therefore, in order to prevent our global partners returning unnecessarily from the field, Bethlehem developed the Nurture Program to equip and prepare the global partners that we send for cross-cultural ministry. Our conviction is that it is the responsibility of the local church to evaluate the character and competency of our global partners. The local church has the mandate to recruit, equip, confirm, and affirm some of its best people in order to send them out as cross-cultural missionaries. Not only is this the biblical model, it is also the model that works best at keeping missionaries on the field. Thus, Bethlehem takes this responsibility seriously and desires to set up our global partners to be able to effectively and joyfully minister long-term in potentially difficult places.

Recruitment

Jesus has commanded his church to "pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:38). Therefore the church is to *pray* that God will raise up missionaries and local workers from her midst.

Recruitment has both an individual and a corporate dimension:

- *Individual* – God communicates His will to praying and biblically saturated individuals in a variety of ways: from a God-given desire arising in a person's heart

and mind (Phil. 2:13); to a persuasive appeal from a godly person (Acts 11:25-26); to a clearly perceived vision (Acts 16:9-10); as well as other ways.

- *Corporate* – The leaders of the church (whether lay or ordained) should take the initiative with individuals of unusual potential for vocational Christian ministry to approach them and encourage them to seriously consider such ministry (Acts 11:25-26; 16:3). God confirms his will for an individual through the consensus of a local church (Acts 13:3). The church must agree with the individual that he or she is indeed called and equipped for a specific mission before they can lay hands on the individual and send him or her out with the church's blessing and support.

Equipping

According to Ephesians 4:11f, the leadership of the church is responsible to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Bethlehem's Nurture Program simply reflects the training that we, as the sending body, are uniquely able to provide and which we deem as important for those being sent out as Bethlehem representatives. We want to do what we can as a local church to equip our global partners to effectively communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ in cultures where: 1) there is no indigenous evangelizing church yet planted, or 2) the indigenous church does not yet have sufficient resources and personnel to evangelize their own people in an effective way, or 3) the indigenous church has not yet matured to the point of sending and supporting their own missionaries to other unreached people groups.

In no way is the Nurture Program to be seen as taking the place of, or in competition with, the training program of individual missions agencies. We require global partners to be sent with a missions agency and strongly encourage all our candidates to participate wholeheartedly in the training programs of that agency to which God leads them. It is our hope that this Nurture Program will actually *complement* and *cooperate with* the various training programs of the missions agencies and will provide the missions agencies with God-centered, church-connected, well-prepared, and highly motivated candidates. This equipping is essential for ensuring the longevity of the ministry of a global partner. The more prepared a candidate is prior to going abroad, the better the candidate will be able to endure suffering and trials when things get difficult.

Confirm and Affirm

God confirms His will for an individual through the consensus of a local church (Acts 13:3). The church must agree with the individual that he is indeed called, equipped, gifted, and a good fit for a specific mission before they can lay hands on the individual and commission him or her for cross-cultural ministry with the church's blessing and support. Thus it is *essential* that the local church knows the candidates that it is putting forth. The Nurture Program is the means by which Bethlehem gets to know the global partners that it will send out into the mission field.

The term "commissioning" is not necessarily a biblical term but is a church practice that is motivated by biblical precedent (Acts 13:2-3; 14:26; 15:40; 1 Tim. 4:14) and biblical principles

concerning the formal “sending” of church members (Acts 8:14-17; 11:29-30; 15:22; 3 John 5-8). As Paul Beals writes, “Commissioning is a symbol of identification that applies to all missionary personnel, both at home and abroad...It is a time when the home church expresses authentication of the appointee, identification with him/her, and delegation of responsibility.”¹

Description of Nurture Program

In regard to preparation for cross-cultural ministry, we have the benefit of learning from both missions history and recent studies on the successes and failures of missionaries. Based upon these, and the mandates of God’s Word, we perceive there to be three key dimensions in which the future global partner needs to develop with the help of the local church. These dimensions will be referred to as *Knowledge*, *Character*, and *Skills*. As one works his way through the Nurture Program, each level of the program will seek to address these aspects of global partner growth. By means of seminars, courses, books, and other resources, the Nurture Program seeks to cultivate these different dimensions in its members.

¹ *A People for His Name*, Paul A. Beals, pg 94.

2 Types of Involvement in Global Outreach

It is the conviction of Bethlehem Baptist Church that global outreach is not simply for those who are global partners, but for every member of the body. Therefore, regardless of whether one is a “goer” or a “sender” he or she is called to be active in the task of global discipleship.

Sender and Short-Term

Senders are a crucial part of global outreach, for without people “holding the rope” in prayer and finances the global partner will be left falling and failing on the mission field. We believe that there are only two types of people in the local church: global partners and senders. There is not a third category. Therefore, everyone who is a regular member of Bethlehem Baptist Church has the responsibility to send in a manner worthy of God (3 John 6).

Bethlehem provides different means for its members to grow in their ability to send well. Part of this is through short-term mission trips where they are given the opportunity to learn and experience a different culture. This opportunity can open members’ eyes to see what global partners experience every day. Not only that, but many of these short-term trips visit and aid global partners in their ministries. In this way, connections are formed that enable those on the trip to know how to further support the global partner in prayer, encouragement, and finances. These trips typically last 1-4 weeks but can be as long as two-years. Short-term trips offer an excellent opportunity to explore what life as a global partner is like and to confirm God’s calling on one’s life.

The level of the Nurture Program that most closely coordinates with this group of people is Level 1. While every sender does not need to be a part of the Nurture Program (nor should they), this level is designed to encourage members in their discipleship to be active, missions-minded members of Bethlehem.

Career Global Partner

Career global partners are those members of Bethlehem who have committed to long-term cross-cultural ministry. They are a crucial part of Bethlehem's mission to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things *for the joy of all peoples* through Jesus Christ. In order to be a career global partner with Bethlehem one needs to successfully complete the Nurture Program.

Five Areas of Strategic Focus - MuSTBC

God has blessed Bethlehem with great growth and influence and this is a good thing. With this growth, however, has come the need for the GO Department to narrow its focus. To accomplish this we have developed five areas of strategic focus based on what Bethlehem global partners are already doing around the world as well as some of Bethlehem's strengths in its own local ministry (Somali outreach, Campus Outreach, Bethlehem College & Seminary, etc.). Focusing our sending efforts on these areas enables us to be more specialized, allows for greater synergy and partnerships among global partners, and creates categories for Bethlehem's congregation to understand what our people are doing around the world. These areas are complementary to our continued mission to send laborers to the unreached peoples of the world and provide direction on how to best accomplish this task. While we find these five focus areas to be helpful, they are not intended to be fixed in stone and must be adapted as the Spirit leads and as ministry needs change. Likewise, the choice of Bethlehem's leadership to focus on these areas should not be seen to diminish the value or importance of other gospel ministries around the world: it is merely our attempt to be more focused and strategic in our sending.

- **Muslim Ministry** - The types of ministry in this category are incredibly numerous, but here the focus is on getting global partners into areas of the world where the population and religious atmosphere is largely dominated by Islam. According to *Operation World* "only about 6% of all foreign missionaries are working for the blessing of Muslims, who constitute a third of all non-Christians."²
- **Student Ministry** - The focus of this category is on discipleship of college students who are in a very transitional time of life. "Worldwide there are over 50 million students in 46,000 universities and colleges. Many will be in leadership roles in 20 years' time. [Yet,] whole student cultures remain scarcely influenced by biblical Christianity."³ Therefore, we want to help reach these students around the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **Theological Education** - With the increasing demographic shift of Christianity towards the global South it is imperative that there also be leadership ready to meet the rising needs and protect these young movements from syncretism and false doctrine. 85% of the churches worldwide are led by men and women with no formal theological training.⁴ Since the Great Commission includes "teaching them to obey

² *Operation World*, Patrick Johnstone & Jason Mandryk, p.14 - 2005 ed.

³ *ibid.*, 14.

⁴ "Report on Global Consultation on Evangelical Missiology", WEA, Oct. 1999

all I have commanded you,” we aim to send out laborers who will train local leaders to serve this movement of the Kingdom.

- **Bible Translation** - It is difficult to plant and sustain the life of a local church without having a copy of the Scriptures in their heart language. There are still nearly 2,100 language groups that are still without any portion of the Bible translated (see wycliffe.org for updates). As part of our desire to see churches planted among all peoples, this area of focus is centered on furthering the work of Bible translation by sending translators, consultants, and the host of other roles required to make this happen.
- **Community Development** - In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in Evangelical concern for physical suffering. At the Lausanne Congress 2010, Pastor John exhorted the delegates to embrace the motto, “we care about all human suffering, especially eternal suffering.” All human suffering is fundamentally a combination of spiritual and sociological issues that need gospel transformation. Bethlehem desires to send out global partners to make the name of Jesus known even as they seek the earthly good of impoverished communities.

As mentioned above, one of the goals of these areas of strategic focus is to allow for greater synergy among global partners. We encourage those in the Nurture Program to consider building relationships with our current global partners on the field in order to create a sustainable presence in hard to reach areas. This creates an excellent team dynamic for a number of reasons. First, it enables global partners to be surrounded with like-minded and theologically similar partners. This allows for deeper fellowship and unity on the mission field. Second, when difficulties arise on the field that may cause one member of the team to leave (visa situation, conflict, financial, sickness, etc.) Bethlehem still maintains a lasting presence with a specific people group. Therefore, while it is not required that those who are sent out by Bethlehem go where there are other Bethlehem global partners, we do encourage those in the Nurture Program to consider doing so.

Note: Unfortunately, we must make it clear that successfully completing the Nurture Program is no guarantee that Bethlehem will send a person as a global partner. While we earnestly desire to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to all peoples, we also must realize that we are limited by our finitude and, therefore, need to be wise stewards of the resources that we have.

3 Structure of the Nurture Program

The Nurture Program is broken up into three distinct levels. Each level builds upon the previous level so that the Nurture Program participant will become more equipped for cross-cultural gospel ministry as he moves closer to completing the Nurture Program. While these levels are distinct, each level seeks to further develop the three dimensions of a global partner mentioned in Section 1: *knowledge, character, and skills*. There are three “gateways” that serve as transitions from one level of the Nurture Program to another. Each of these gateways and levels has a different requirement in order to best gauge the applicant’s level of readiness for full-time cross-cultural ministry. As the participant journeys through the Nurture Program they are required to fill out an electronic Nurture Program Checklist in which they will mark the components that they have completed. It is required for participants to submit a journal entry to the GO Department as they progressively complete Nurture Program components. This enables the GO Department to track a participant’s overall progress through the Nurture Program and evaluate what he is learning. These journal entries are required to be submitted to the GO Department for review by each of the different gateways of the Nurture Program. We also strongly encourage participants to complete the various requirements *in community*. Learning alongside others is an incredibly helpful tool that enables one to better process and retain information covered.

Note: Married couples aspiring to be sent out from Bethlehem as global partners must *both* complete the requirements of the Nurture Program.

Gateway 1

The first gateway is the actual entry into the Nurture Program. In order to become a member of the Nurture Program, one must take three steps. The first step is to attend the Nurture Program Orientation that the Global Outreach (GO) Department offers multiple times per year. This orientation is designed as a basic overview of the material covered in this handbook, and will include the opportunity to ask questions. It enables the attender to get a feel for Bethlehem’s process of global partner preparation and to understand the purpose and structure of the Nurture Program. The second step is to complete the Nurture Program Level 1 Application (Appendix 3). This application is very brief and simply serves as a means for the GO Department to get to know the applicant. The final step is a Welcome Interview with either the GO Pastor or with a member of the GO Team at the campus that the applicant attends. This Welcome Interview is exactly that: a *welcome* into the Nurture

Program. Our goal is to make Level 1 as wide as possible so that anyone interested in missions would be able to join. After the Welcome Interview, the applicant becomes an official member of the Nurture Program and is able to start moving through Level 1.

Level 1

The goal of Level 1 of the Nurture Program is to create a foundation of discipleship which will enable the one to grow in his passion for missions. Because we believe that the local church is essential in God’s purpose for reaching the nations, membership and participation in the life of the local church are stressed in this level. Beyond general participation in the local church, Level 1 members are also helped to build solid foundations for their theology and missiology. Thus, we require that those in Level 1 read a handful of formative books, attend seminars, and take the *Perspectives* course. Since Level 1 focuses on general discipleship within Bethlehem, it does not address any skills components. What follows is a detailed description of the requirements for Level 1 and a description for how each requirement relates to the three dimensions of a global partner.

Gateway 1: Orientation; L1 Application; Welcome Interview		
Knowledge	Character	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Perspectives ▸ Desiring God ▸ Future Grace ▸ Let the Nations Be Glad! ▸ Suffering for the Sake of the Body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Membership at Bethlehem ▸ Consistent devotional life ▸ Regular worship service participation ▸ Small group participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Cross-culturally relationship component
<p>Other opportunities: NP Update Emails; NP Group on The Table; Missions Fellowships</p>		

Knowledge Requirements

- *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*

The *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* course “presents a multifaceted collection of readings exploring the biblical, historical, cultural, and strategic dimensions of world evangelization.”- It covers a large amount of material regarding missiology. This course will benefit both those called to be global partners and those called to be senders. *Perspectives* is offered regularly in the Twin Cities, occasionally at Bethlehem, and can also be taken online. The Nurture Program does not require members to take *Perspectives* for credit, but it must be completed to move onto Level 2.

- *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* - John Piper

The theology and vision of God offered in *Desiring God* is a distinctive that has fueled the mission of Bethlehem for over thirty years. The premise of the book is that God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him. Therefore, God's glory and our joy are not at odds with each other but are in harmony with one another. Because of this reality, we can delight in taking the gospel to the hard places of the world. Level 1 members are required to read *Desiring God* and to write a one-page journal entry over the book. They are also strongly encouraged to either attend, watch, or listen to the *Desiring God Seminar*.

- *The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in Future Grace* - John Piper

Sanctification is a huge part of the Christian life. It is imperative that global partners understand the nature of sin and how the believer fights for joy and pursues holiness, both for their own souls and for their ministries. *Future Grace* proposes that the way in which the Christian severs the root of sin is by trusting in God's promises and living by faith in the grace that he promises to give. Level 1 members are required to read *Future Grace* and to write a one-page journal entry concerning the material covered in the book. As with *Desiring God*, we encourage members to attend, watch, or listen to the *Future Grace Seminar*.

- *Let the Nations be Glad!* - John Piper

What is the goal of missions? This is a question that each missionary and sender must contemplate and seek to answer. In *Let the Nations be Glad!* Pastor John argues that, as with all of life, worship of God is the goal and fuel of missions. By examining crucial aspects of missions such as prayer, suffering, the doctrine of Hell, and faith, Pastor John shows that God is exalted and glorified by taking the gospel to those who have never heard it before. This book has proven to be foundational in the lives of many missionaries around the world, and we trust it will be used by God in the same way in the life of those in the Nurture Program. Level 1 members must read *Let the Nations be Glad!* and write a one-page journal entry, and are encouraged to attend, watch, or listen to the *Let the Nations be Glad! Seminar*.

- *Suffering for the Sake of the Body Seminar*

Suffering is a part of the life of every Christian and, often more so, every missionary. The mission field contains numerous trials: sickness, rejection, persecution, death, and the list could go on. Therefore, the believer must be equipped to suffer well. Satan seeks to draw God's people away from obedience by means of both pleasure and pain. However, because God works all things for the good of those who love him, suffering can be used to benefit the one suffering, the body of Christ, and the nations. This reality has led Pastor John to give an excellent seminar called *Suffering for the Sake of the Body*. We require that Level 1 members either attend, watch, or listen to the seminar and write a one-page journal entry interacting with the material covered in the seminar.

Character Requirements

- Church membership

In order to be sent out as a global partner, one must become a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church. This enables one to enter into a covenant with the leaders and other members of Bethlehem. Church membership is an essential part of the Christian walk, and is an excellent way to keep one another accountable and to grow in conformity to the image of Christ. In order to become a member at Bethlehem, one has to attend the ASK class, have an interview with an elder, and affirm the membership covenant at a Bethlehem worship service. In Level 1 Nurture Program members are required to become members of Bethlehem.

- Consistent devotional life

It goes without saying that regular time reading the Bible and praying is necessary for every believer. If this is true in one's own context, how much more will it be true when a person is placed into another culture with another set of values! Spiritual disciplines like daily Bible reading, Scripture memory, prayer, and fasting are all crucial for global partners. One of the goals of Level 1 is for members to cultivate a regular and healthy devotional life.

- Regular worship attendance

The weekend worship services are the regular time that the church assembles together to worship God as one body. Members of Bethlehem join together across three campuses to praise God in singing, praying, and preaching and are mutually encouraged by one another. These are sweet times of fellowship and edification in the life of the believer. Through our worship services members of the Nurture Program are able to experience elements of worship that are distinctive to Bethlehem. Worship services across the world will appear vastly different based upon context. One exercise that may be helpful is to reflect upon how a worship service embodying Bethlehem distinctives plays out in other cultures.

- Small Group participation

Small Groups are Bethlehem's means of connecting a church of thousands of members together with one another for care, accountability, encouragement, and fellowship. A Small Group is a group of six to twelve people who gather in one another's homes and are led by skilled leaders who receive ongoing support in order to balance worship, Bible study, sharing, prayer, and service to one another and those outside of the group. Each level of the Nurture Program has a built in means of keeping the participant accountable to complete the program. Members of Level 1 are to utilize these Small Groups to this end. We recommend that one communicates his involvement in the Nurture Program to his Small Group, who will then be able to offer encouragement and help track his progress through the program.

Skills Requirements

- Cross-cultural relationship component

While the vast majority of language and culture learning will be completed through the global partner's missions agency, Bethlehem does desire that those in the Nurture Program are given an opportunity to build a relationship with someone from another culture. In order to accomplish this, we have developed an assignment in which members of Level 1 meet regularly with someone from a different culture to learn both culture and language and to build a relationship (Appendix 6). This experience will enable one to gain a glimpse of what it is like to develop relationships on the mission field.

Other Opportunities

Along with the requirements of completing Level 1 of the Nurture Program, Level 1 members are given other opportunities that will further help them in their journey towards cross-cultural ministry. They will regularly receive Nurture Program Update emails that contain helpful information about future retreats, seminars, and resource recommendations. Finally, Level 1 members are invited to attend monthly Missions Fellowships where they can be encouraged, connect with others in the Nurture Program, and hear global partners share valuable lessons learned on the field.

Gateway 2

Once one has completed most of the requirements for Level 1, he should begin to prepare for the next level of the Nurture Program. The gateway for this level narrows as the skills of Level 2 become more specific for cross-cultural ministry. Gateway 2 includes the Level 2 application (Appendix 4), which is more extensive than the Level 1 application as well as an in-depth personal inventory called the "Preparedness Questionnaire." The goal of the questionnaire is to help members of the Nurture Program consider and evaluate some of the difficulties that come with living in a different culture. Both this questionnaire and the application are reviewed in person with a counselor and the GO Pastor. One should contact the GO Department when he is ready for the "Preparedness Questionnaire" and will be connected with a local counselor to go over the questionnaire. Because this level narrows, some members of Level 1 may temporarily remain in Level 1 for an extended season or may find that they would prefer not to continue on with the Nurture Program, as they are led to be senders.

Level 2

The goal of Level 2 is to continue to build upon the foundation of discipleship laid in Level 1 and focus upon various knowledge components and skills that are specifically applicable to cross-cultural gospel ministry. In this level, one will take TBI courses, listen to seminars, learn about conflict transformation, develop cross-cultural relationships, along with other useful requirements. The requirements of this level make up the majority of the Nurture Program requirements, and therefore will take longer to complete. What follows is a detailed description of the requirements for Level 2 and how they relate to these dimensions.

Gateway 2: L2 Application; Counselor Interview; Pastoral Interview		
Knowledge	Character	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Mining God's Word ▸ Theological Foundations (I and II) ▸ TULIP ▸ Sexual Complementarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Accountability Partner ▸ Interpersonal Conflict Transformation ▸ Spiritual Conflict Transformation ▸ Cross-cultural Conflict Transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Missions Fellowships ▸ Nurture Program Retreat

Knowledge Requirements

- *Mining God's Word: How to Study the Bible*

Mining God's Word: How to Study the Bible is a 12-week course offered by The Bethlehem Institute (TBI) which serves as an introduction to inductive Bible study and aims to enable life-long digging and delighting in God's Word. Students taking *Mining God's Word* will learn different strategies and principles of biblical interpretation and will apply them as they dig deep into the book of Philippians. While the book of Philippians is the primary text for the course, the course aims at imparting study skills that are applicable to the entire Bible. Members of Level 2 are required to take *Mining God's Word*, which will help them cultivate Bible study skills to utilize on the mission-field.

- *Theological Foundations I and II: Essentials of Christian Doctrine*

Theological Foundations: Essentials of Christian Doctrine consists of two 12-week courses which are offered by TBI and designed to introduce students to systematic theology, leading to both Christ-centered worship and the living-out of doctrinal truths. This course is an attempt to systematically present what the Apostle Paul called "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The course utilizes Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* as its required textbook, but also includes readings from the Bethlehem Baptist Church Elder Affirmation of Faith and writings from the ministry of Pastor John. Throughout the course, students will study biblical topics by closely examining key biblical passages and by answering provocative questions, along with various reading assignments. Level 2 members are required to take both *Theological Foundations I* and *Theological Foundations II*.

- *TULIP Seminar*

One of Bethlehem's distinctives is a high view of God's sovereignty, which is commonly known as Calvinism. Pastor John has given a seminar called *TULIP*, which examines the five points of Calvinism (*T* - total depravity, *U* - unconditional election, *L* - limited atonement, *I* - irresistible grace, *P* - perseverance of the saints) and shows how these points are helpful in understanding soteriology (the doctrine of salvation). Contrary to what

many think, these sweet doctrines fuel the task of missions. Members of Level 2 are required to attend, watch, or listen to the *TULIP Seminar* and write a one-page journal concerning the material that was covered. They are also required to read chapters two and five of *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in being God*, though we encourage reading all of *The Pleasures of God*.

- *Sexual Complementarity: The Pursuit of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Seminar*

A biblical understanding of gender roles is crucial for life in any culture. Each culture has its own understanding of masculinity and femininity, but God has spoken through his Word concerning the way that men and women are created to relate and complement one another. The *Sexual Complementarity Seminar* will equip one for both life on the mission field and in their own families. Level 2 members are required to attend, watch, or listen to this seminar and to write a one-page journal entry processing the material covered. Beyond the seminar, they are also required to read chapters 1, 2, 26 and pages 469-471 in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Since this book contains a wealth of information, we encourage them to read all of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*.

Character Requirements

- Nurture Program Accountability Partner

While small group involvement served as the means of accountability for Level 1 of the Nurture Program, in Level 2, one is required to have a specific person who will *regularly keep him accountable for completing the requirements of the Nurture Program*. The goal of this relationship is to offer specific accountability to help keep *Members* on track to move through the Nurture Program, using the Nurture Program Component Checklist (Appendix 1) as a guide. This relationship is particularly beneficial since Level 2 is much more involved than Level 1. Level 2 members should meet with their Nurture Program accountability partner at least every other month.

- Interpersonal Conflict Transformation

Unfortunately, one of the top-five preventable reasons missionaries leave the field is due to conflict with other missionaries. Because we live in a fallen, sin-scarred world, conflict is inevitable. Therefore, interpersonal conflict is something that must be addressed as part of our sanctification process, and not just something to simply be ignored or avoided. The good news is that conflict can be transformed into a healthy, unity-building, spiritual growth process when each of us considers the manifold grace of God revealed in the body of Christ through unique personality types and spiritual gifts which cause people to see things from different perspectives. It is our desire to send out missionaries who are aware of their own weaknesses, and are able to bear with the weaknesses of others, dealing with interpersonal conflict in a God-honoring, Christ-exalting, and in a biblical unity-seeking manner. *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* by Ken Sande is

an excellent resource that provides guidance to move from conflict resolution to biblical reconciliation. Level 2 members are required to read either *The Peacemaker* or a similar book with approval from the GO Department and to write a one-page journal entry processing the material covered in the book.

- Spiritual Conflict Transformation

Not only does conflict occur within the human relationships that we have, but there is also a spiritual element of conflict that missionaries will undergo. The Bible makes it clear that God has allowed for our adversary, the Devil, to prowl around—although with divinely appointed limits. There are many ways that people propose to deal with spiritual conflict; some are helpful and some are not. We have found two books to be particularly useful for understanding this issue: *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* by Clinton E. Arnold and *Essentials of Spiritual Warfare: Equipped to Win the Battle* by A. Scott Moreau. Members of Level 2 are required to read *one* of these two books, or a similar book with approval from the GO Department, and to write a one-page journal entry interacting with the material which was covered.

- Cross-Cultural Conflict Transformation

Missionaries may have the most noble and loving goals in resolving conflict with nationals. Yet often for lack of understanding local customs and cultural protocol, missionaries may find their mediation attempts causing more dissension than desired. In fact, tragically, missionaries have been asked to leave certain fields simply because of their insistence on utilizing Western practices for conflict resolution. God's Word is full of examples of conflict mediation that is more Eastern than Western—more collective than individual in focus. Philemon is just one example where Paul utilized third-party mediation. Effective missionaries should beware of their own cultural assumptions related to conflict with those from other cultures. We recommend three books on the topic of cross-cultural conflict transformation: *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures* by David W. Augsburger, *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* by Duane Elmer, and *Conflict or Connection* by Levi Kiedel. Level 2 members are required to read *one* of these three books, or a similar book with approval from the GO Department, and to write a one-page journal entry interacting with the material covered in it.

Skills Requirements

- Missions Fellowships

As one works his way through the Nurture Program he will have different opportunities to connect with fellow missions-minded members of Bethlehem. One of the great means to do this is through Missions Fellowships. These gatherings meet monthly to discuss a topic and be encouraged and equipped for the work that God is doing around the world. While in Level 1 members are invited to attend Missions Fellowships; in Level 2 they are required to *regularly* attend these gatherings. This does not mean that they have to be

involved in every one, but we do ask to make a commitment to be a regular attender of Missions Fellowships, as they are a helpful means of stirring one's soul towards the nations.

- Nurture Program Retreat

Throughout the year there will regularly be retreats made available for Nurture Program members. These retreats usually cover a topic pertinent to missions and are, therefore, helpful in equipping members with a backpack of skills necessary to minister effectively in a cross-cultural context. These retreats also provide an opportunity for fellowship and interaction with the GO Pastor, members of the GO Team, and other participants in the Nurture Program. Members of Level 2 are required to attend at least *one* Nurture Program Retreat.

Gateway 3

Once the Nurture Program member has completed the majority of the requirements for Level 2, he is able to begin the transition to the final level of the Nurture Program. The Level 3 application (Appendix 5) is meant to serve members in evaluating their experience in the Nurture Program and guide them in selecting agencies, ministries, and peoples to minister among. Once members have completed the Level 3 application an interview with the campus-specific GO Team will take place. During this meeting the GO Team will review this information, make suggestions, and will determine whether or not to approve him or her for the status of *Career Global Partner*. It must again be noted that successfully completing the Nurture Program is no guarantee that Bethlehem will send someone as a global partner; this sending is contingent upon the resources available to the church. If the member is approved as a global partner, the final step is to let the GO Department know of his departure date in order to schedule a commissioning on his particular campus. These commissionings are our chance to pray over global partners and recognize them before the whole congregation.

Level 3

The goal of Level 3 is to enable members to prepare for long-term sending. Once accepted into Level 3 members of the Nurture Program are eligible for long-term sending and will receive a letter of recommendation with which they may make full and final application to agencies and begin their agency-specific preparation process. The requirements in this level dip significantly in order to allow space for continued relationship building, agency requirements, and partnership development, which includes the formation of a Barnabas Support Team. This level includes a meeting with the GO Team and climaxes in a commissioning from the member's home campus.

Gateway 3: L3 Application and GO Team Interview

Knowledge	Character	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry-specific recommendations from GO Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a life of discipleship while preparing for the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidacy with a missions agency Barnabas Team and partnership development

Knowledge Requirements

This level of the Nurture Program intentionally eases back on the knowledge components. This does not mean that members do not have more to learn! We simply recognize that by Level 3 they will have the knowledge necessary to cultivate life-long study and learning on the mission field. The only knowledge requirements of Level 3 are specific agency requirements and any ministry specific recommendations made by the GO Team during or after the GO Team interview. These might include reading a book on community development or meeting with a certain person to learn more about a particular ministry, along with many other options.

Character Requirements

Having proceeded through Levels 1 and 2, Nurture Program members have demonstrated a consistent life of discipleship. As they move closer to being commissioned by Bethlehem, it is imperative that this lifestyle continues.

Skills Requirements

- Candidacy with missions agency

In order to be sent out as a global partner, a member must be sent with a particular missions agency. Therefore, the largest part of Level 3 is going through the candidacy process with the missions agency of choice. Members are to partner with a Bethlehem approved agency and go through the training and support raising process that is distinctive to that particular missions agency. Use the MissioNexus⁵ network to locate approved agencies.

- Barnabas Teams

All global partners sent out by Bethlehem must have a Barnabas Team. Barnabas Teams are a crucial part of Bethlehem’s missionary care and serve as a link between the global partner and the local church. A Barnabas Team is a group of 6-12 people who meet monthly to provide ongoing prayer support, occasional stateside logistical help, and regular communication for global partners on the field. It can consist of both Bethlehem members and nonmembers, however the team leader must be either a member or regular attender of

⁵ <https://netforum.avectra.com/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=EXCHANGE&WebCode=OrgSearch>

Bethlehem. Members must establish a Barnabas Team before their final meeting with the GO Team.

4 Concluding Remarks

Our aim in this Nurture Program is not to overwhelm participants with things to do or hoops to jump through. Rather it is simply what we regard as foundational training for future ministry. There are many more books, classes, and seminars which we considered requiring—but we did not want lay too heavy of a burden on participants. The Nurture Program also serves as a structure for the GO Department and the GO Teams to observe participants doing ministry in the life of the local church in order to affirm and confirm their calling and giftedness for cross-cultural gospel-ministry.

The Nurture Program is a self-motivated program, meaning that individuals will benefit from this program to the degree that they participate in it. Our hope is that participants in the Nurture Program will feel ownership of it and will take initiative in helping plan retreats, seminars, Missions Fellowships, and other related activities at Bethlehem. We recommend that those in the Nurture Program take advantage of whatever extra seminars, courses, and ministry opportunities that seem pertinent to their particular situation.

Finally, it is not unusual for individuals to begin the Nurture Program and sense the Lord leading them elsewhere before they complete the program. We do not consider this a failed result; in fact, we praise God because we believe that he will use them as better informed and more sensitive senders for having participated in the Nurture Program.

May God bless all those who labor to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things *for the joy of all peoples* through Jesus Christ.

Appendix 1: Nurture Program Component Checklist

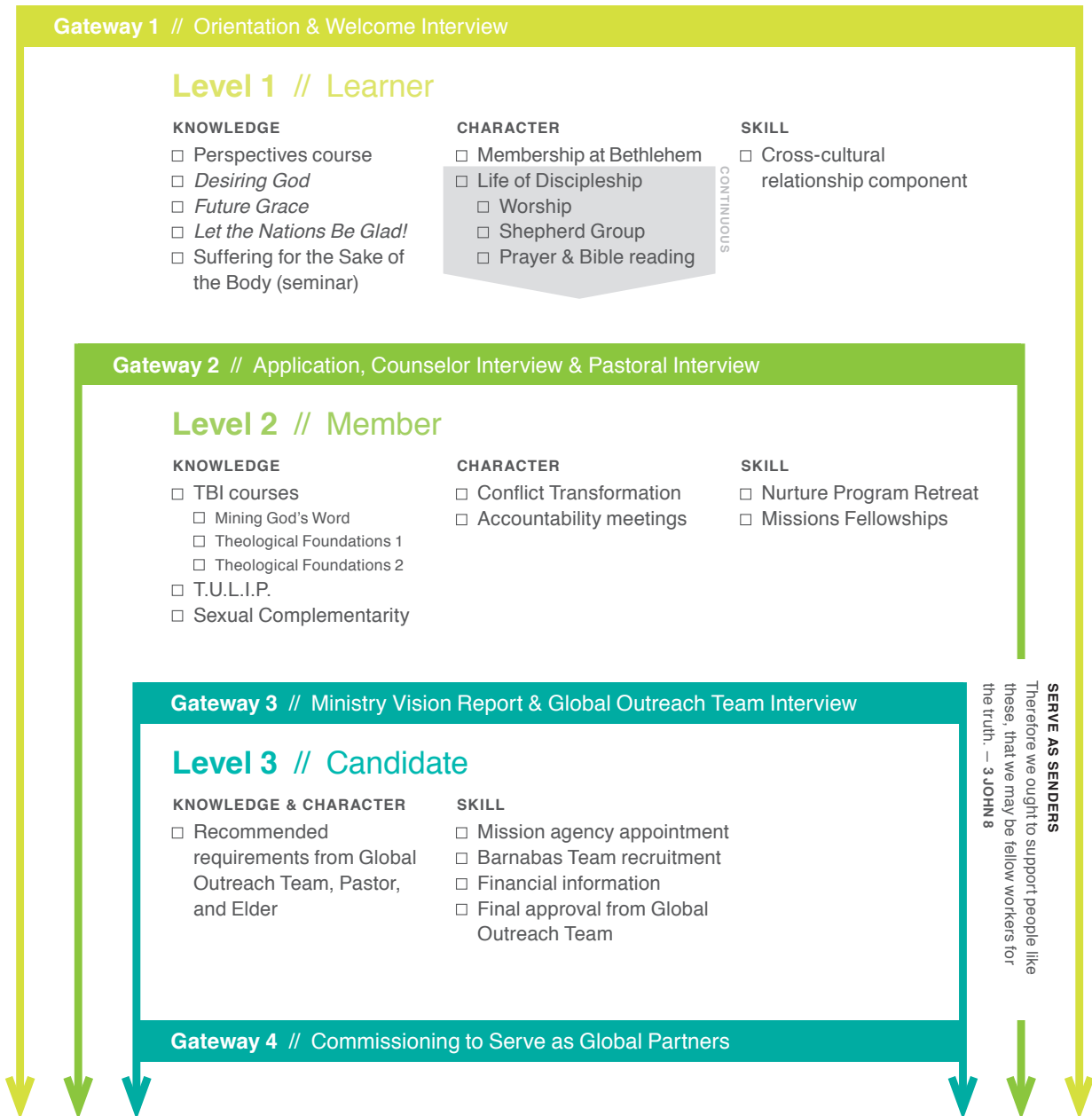
<h1>NP Component Checklist Sheet</h1>	
<h2>Level 1</h2>	
<h3>Gateway #1</h3>	
Attend Nurture Program Orientation	Date Completed:
Read through Nurture Program Handbook	Date Completed:
Complete Level 1 Application and Welcome Interview	Date Completed:
Knowledge Components	
Perspectives - Complete "Perspectives" course for credit or certificate	Date Completed:
Desiring God - Read Desiring God by John Piper and submit journal entry	Date Completed:
Future Grace - Read Future Grace by John Piper and submit journal entry	Date Completed:
Let the Nations be Glad - Read Let the Nations be Glad by John Piper and submit journal entry	Date Completed:
Suffering for the Sake of the Body - Attend, watch, or listen to the Suffering for the Sake of the Body seminar and submit journal entry	Date Completed:
Character Components	
Plan for regular devotional life of prayer, Bible study, and memorization (personal and family)	
Regular attendance at BBC worship services	Attending Since:
Regular involvement in a BBC Small Group	Leader's Name:
Become a Covenant Member of Bethlehem	Date of Membership:
Skills Components	
Cross-Cultural Relationship Component	Date Completed:
Administrative	
Begin receiving monthly Nurture Program update emails about missions opportunities around Bethlehem (if not receiving, please email nurtureprogram@hopeinGod.org)	Date Completed:
<h2>Level 2</h2>	
<h3>Gateway #2</h3>	
Complete Level 2 Application	Date Completed:
Complete Preparedness Questionnaire	Date Completed:
Complete Counselor Interview	Date Completed:
Complete Pastoral Interview	Date Completed:
Knowledge Components	
Mining God's Word: How to Study the Bible	Date Completed:
Theological Foundations 1	Date Completed:
Theological Foundations 2	Date Completed:
T.U.L.I.P. - Attend/watch/listen to the T.U.L.I.P seminar; read chapters 2 & 5 of Pleasures of	Date Completed:

God by John Piper; submit journal entry		
Sexual Complementarity - Attend/watch/listen to the Sexual Complementarity seminar; read chapters 1, 2, 26 & pages 469-471 in Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood by John Piper and Wayne Grudem; submit journal entry		Date Completed:
Character Components		
Interpersonal Conflict Transformation Read ONE of the following books on interpersonal conflict transformation and submit a journal entry - "The Peacemaker" by Ken Sande; or - Alternative book approved by GO Dept.		Date Completed:
Spiritual conflict transformation Read ONE of the following books on spiritual conflict transformation and submit a journal entry - "Essentials of Spiritual Warfare" by A. Scott Moreau - "3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare" by Clint E. Arnold		Date Completed:
Cross-Cultural Conflict Transformation Read ONE of the following books on cross-cultural conflict transformation and submit a journal entry - "Conflict or Connection" by Levi Kiedel - "Cross-Cultural Conflict" by Duane Elmer - "Conflict Mediation Across Cultures" by David Augsberger		Date Completed:
Skills Components		
5 Evangelistic Encounters and submit a journal entry for each encounter		Date Completed:
Attend at least one Nurture Program retreat		Date Completed:
Engage in local ministry through BBC		
		Date Completed:
		Date Completed:
		Date Completed:
Attend at least 4 Missions Fellowship Gatherings per year		Date Completed:
Level 3		
Gateway #3		
Complete Level 3 Application		Date Completed:
Schedule and complete Level 3 interview with GO Team		Date Completed:
Skills Component		
Pursue appointment with an approved mission agency.		Date Completed:
Form a Barnabas Team and meet together formally at least once before departure		Date Completed:
Final Steps		
After appointment, submit financial information to the GO Team for review		Date Completed:
Schedule a commissioning with the GO department for a few weeks before departure		Date Completed:

Appendix 2: Nurture Program Overview Diagram

Nurture Program // Global Partner Preparation Process

Purpose: To prepare cross-cultural ministers in the context of the local church with the basic knowledge, character, and skill required for effective service.



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

—MATTHEW 28:19–20

Appendix 3: Nurture Program Level 1 Application



LEVEL 1 - APPLICATION FORM

NOTE: For those planning to be sent by Bethlehem, we require official enrollment in the Nurture Program for a minimum of two years, measured from Level 1 interview date, which will take place after the receipt of this application and attendance at Orientation.

PART I – BASIC INFORMATION

Name:		Date:	
Address:		Home:	Date of Birth:
		Mobile:	
Email:		I attend the following campus & service regularly:	
Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widow/er <u>If Applicable</u> Spouse's Name: Wedding Anniversary: Children (name & age):		<u>Downtown:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Sat. evening <input type="checkbox"/> 9 or 11 am <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. evening <u>North:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> 9am <input type="checkbox"/> 11am <u>South:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> 9am <input type="checkbox"/> 11am	
Current Relationship to Bethlehem Baptist Church (check one):			
<input type="checkbox"/> Member since (month/yr) and attending since (month/yr).			

- Regular attender since (month/yr).
- Occasional church attender.
- Involved in a church other than Bethlehem (please specify):
- Church Name:
- Address:
- Denomination:
- Member? Yes No

List three Bethlehem pastors, elders or small group leaders who know you well and could serve as references for you:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

PART II – PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

1) Give a brief account of your spiritual pilgrimage to date.

2) Describe your interest in joining the Nurture Program.

[OPTIONAL] Some candidates, based on their background and involvement at Bethlehem, may have grounds for exemption from level 1 and proceed directly to level 2. If you believe you are in that category, briefly explain how you are currently fulfilling (or have fulfilled) all level 1 requirements. If such an exemption is granted you will be notified and asked to complete the level 2 application in preparation for its corresponding interview process.

Appendix 4: Nurture Program Level 2 Application



LEVEL 2 - APPLICATION FORM

NOTE: Please complete this form in its entirety and email it to nurtureprogram@hopeingod.org.

PART I – BASIC INFORMATION

Name:		Date:	
Address:		Home:	Date of Birth:
		Mobile:	
Email:		I attend the following campus & service regularly:	
Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widow/er		<u>Downtown:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Sat. evening <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. 9am <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. 11am <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. evening	
<u>If Applicable</u> Spouse's Name: Wedding Anniversary: Children (name & age):		<u>North:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. 9am <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. 11am <u>South:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. 9am <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. 11am	
Current Relationship to Bethlehem Baptist Church (check one):			

Member since (month/yr) and attending since (month/yr).

Regular attender since (month/yr).

Occasional church attender.

Involved in a church other than Bethlehem (please specify):

Church Name:

Address:

Denomination:

Member? Yes No

List three Bethlehem pastors, elders or small group leaders who know you well and could serve as references for you:

1)

2)

3)

PART II – PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

1) Give a significant account of your spiritual pilgrimage to date.

2) Describe how God has been leading you towards cross-cultural ministry to date.

3) Describe your post-secondary academic history (schools attended, dates, majors/minors and degrees earned).

4) Describe your work history (companies, positions, duties, etc.).

5) Describe your past and current ministry experiences. Include experiences gained through past and present church/para-church involvement; short-term missions projects, etc. Be sure to include as well, specific examples of experiences in personal evangelism and discipleship, both within the same culture and cross-cultural.

6) Describe your experiences in praying for the sick, hurting, and unreached.

7) Describe what your vision for your future is in terms of missions/ministry and why you would like to join Level 2.

Appendix 5: Nurture Program Level 3 Application



LEVEL 3 - APPLICATION FORM

NOTE: Please complete this form in its entirety and email it to nurtureprogram@hopeingod.org.

PART I – BASIC INFORMATION

Name:		Date:	
Address:		Home:	Date of Birth:
		Mobile:	
Email:		I attend the following campus & service regularly: Downtown: <input type="checkbox"/> Sat. evening <input type="checkbox"/> 9 or 11am <input type="checkbox"/> Sun. evening North: <input type="checkbox"/> 9am <input type="checkbox"/> 11am South: <input type="checkbox"/> 9am	
Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widow/er			
If Applicable Spouse's Name:			
Wedding Anniversary: Children (names & ages):			
Member of Bethlehem Baptist Church since (month/yr) and attending since (month/yr).			
List three persons from whom you have requested references: (recommended – (1) leader at Bethlehem, (2) employer or ministry supervisor, (3) personal friend)			

<p>1)</p> <p>2)</p> <p>3)</p>
<p>Are you in complete agreement with Bethlehem's Elder Affirmation of Faith? If not, please list all points of disagreement.</p>

PART II – NURTURE PROGRAM QUESTIONS	
<i>NP Component</i>	<i>Please answer the following Nurture Program questions in 5-7 sentences.</i>
<i>Desiring God</i>	How does Christian Hedonism play a part in your life?
<i>Future Grace</i>	What are some tools that you have found helpful for putting sin to death in your own life and growing in holiness? How have God's promises played a part in your sanctification?
<i>Suffering and the Sovereignty of God</i>	How does the sovereignty of God affect your understanding of suffering and trials? How do you see this understanding playing out on the mission field?
<i>Mining God's Word</i>	What tools do you utilize when doing personal Bible study? How would you use these tools on the mission field?
<i>Theological Foundations</i>	Why do you think Bethlehem requires its global partners to know and love certain doctrines?
<i>TULIP</i>	What is your understanding of God's sovereignty in man's salvation? How does this affect the way that you would share the gospel with someone?
<i>Biblical Manhood &</i>	Describe how what the Bible teaches on biblical manhood and womanhood affect the way that you live? What do you think biblical manhood and womanhood would look like

<i>Womanhood</i>	in a different cultural context?
<i>Interpersonal Conflict</i>	From the book that you read, what are some ways you learned to glorify God through interpersonal conflict transformation?
<i>Spiritual Conflict</i>	What is your current understanding of spiritual warfare? How do you envision spiritual warfare affecting your ministry?
<i>Cross-Cultural Conflict</i>	How are you feeling about encountering trials and difficulties (i.e. communication, social cues, etc.) in a different cultural context?
<i>Language & Culture Learning</i>	What was the most challenging part of the language and cultural learning assignment? What was the most rewarding part?

PART III – MINISTRY INFORMATION

***NOTE:** This section of the application is designed to draw from personal research but should not simply be a copy of lengthy materials. Please write concise answers to each question and if necessary attach additional materials. Further, while this unit is designed to draw out your personal preferences and desires, the GO Team may challenge some areas you feel “led” towards. This is always done in humility before God and love towards you as they seek to serve you in this preparation process.*

1) Based on research you have conducted and travels you have made, what region of the world are you drawn towards for the sake of ministry? What are the dominant people groups in this region? What potential do you see for engaging any of them?

2) At this stage in your development, how would you describe your vision for ministry and the desires God has placed in your heart?

3) As far as you know and have received affirmation from others in leadership, what are your spiritual gifts? How do these play a part in the specific ministry that you are looking into?

4) List 2-3 agencies you have studied and inquired about? How do you see each agency working well with this vision, your personality, your gifting and experience, and the region/people group you sense God leading you towards?

5) Which agency is currently your top choice? Briefly describe the preparation process they would still require of you.

6) At this time is there any further training you sense is necessary for you to complete before departure to a field of cross-cultural ministry?

Appendix 6: Cross-Cultural Relationship Component

Nurture Program Cross-Cultural Relationship

One of the goals for this component is that you will be given the opportunity to see what it is like to form a relationship with someone from a culture other than your own. Through this relationship you should be able to begin to pick up on different elements of language and culture. This will be helpful as you learn more about yourself as a language and culture learner prior to departing for the mission field. It will allow you to identify some of your weaknesses in crossing cultures, as well as some of your strengths. It will help you to see what elements you do and do not enjoy in learning about a new culture. All of this should be helpful as you seek to discern what ministry God has called you to.

This component is intentionally open-ended in that we want to give you freedom to build a cross-cultural relationship however you feel is best. There are many ways that you can complete this component. The main goal is that you begin to be exposed to different language and cultural aspects of your cross-cultural friend. To that end, we have included a list of possible discussion topics as well as opportunities to get to know someone from another culture. After you have had at least five meetings with a cross-cultural friend, submit a one to two page journal entry to nurtureprogram@hopeinGod.org. The journal entry should address the following questions:

- What did you learn about your friend's culture?
- What did you learn about your friend's language?
- What aspects of the component did you most enjoy?
- What aspects of the component did you least enjoy?
- What did you learn about yourself as a language and culture learner?

Contact the GO Department if you have already had substantial cross-cultural experience, which we would consider accepting as a functional equivalent. We hope that you will be blessed as you begin to dive into the world of language and culture learning.

- The Global Outreach Department

Topics to Discuss

- › Greetings and farewells
- › Expressing gratitude
- › Numbers
- › Verbs
- › Food
- › Religion
- › Family
- › Hometown
- › Social gatherings
- › Clothing

Opportunities to Connect

- › SALT
- › Teaching ESL
- › Hosting an international student for dinners
- › Volunteering at a local cross-cultural center

Appendix 7: Biblical Values in Contextualization

Dear Global Partner Candidate,

It brings us great joy to see God raising up laborers from our midst to enter into His harvest among the millions of unreached Muslims throughout the world. As we interact with other missionaries and agencies at work among Muslims, we are encouraged by the praise-worthy progress of the gospel through many creative and culturally-relevant means. At the same time, we also recognize the potential for dangerous misunderstandings to occur as a result of certain contextualization strategies. Therefore, we believe that it is of strategic importance in our partnership with you to discern the theological presuppositions that ground our practical strategies, particularly as it relates to gospel contextualization among Muslims.

We believe that the Bible governs and fuels missiological practice. Our strategies, therefore, must stem from a biblical-theological understanding rather than pragmatic considerations. Our ultimate aim in contextualization is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God, through the exaltation of Jesus Christ, for the joy and deliverance of all peoples in bondage to Christ-denying religions – particularly the millions in bondage to Islam. We long to see members of our body establish missiological strategies that fly the banner of this glorious aim.

We believe that God created all languages on earth (Gen. 11:1-10) and that through the proclamation of the gospel He is gathering worshippers from every tribe, people and language to exalt the risen Christ (Acts 1:8; 2:1-5; Rev. 5:9; 7:9). We believe that some level of contextualization is necessary for the gospel to be effectively proclaimed across ethno-linguistic and cultural barriers. The aim of faithful contextualization is the clear explanation of the gospel in a foreign cultural context. While language and culture are intimately linked, we believe that the gospel aims to *transform* culture, rather than to simply *redeem* culture. Thus, as regenerate men and women seek to bring their lives into conformance with Christ, social behaviors, local customs and religious practices radically change (Col. 2:18-23; Acts 19:18-20). Everything once done in ignorance is now to be made obedient to the will of God (1 Peter 1:13-18; Rom 12.1-2). Some cultural practices must be abandoned as they are examined in light of the Scriptures (Acts 15:28-29; 19:17-20). Practices that do not conflict with apostolic teaching may be reoriented to clearly magnify the greatness of God so that all things are done to the glory of God in Christ. (1 Cor. 10.28-31).

The following questions and their corresponding biblical considerations are aimed at helping our global partners and candidates think about how to most faithfully and clearly communicate the gospel in their respective contexts. The Biblical guidelines that follow are what we consider to be the key texts and issues that should help inform your answers. During your time of preparation at Bethlehem, the Foreign Missions Committee and I will look forward to working with you as you think through these significant theological issues and their practical implications.

For the exaltation of Christ and the joy of all peoples,



Todd Rasmuson, Minister for Global Outreach *and*

The Global Outreach Team

Questions to Guide Bethlehem's Global Partners Ministering Among Muslim Peoples

Your name: _____ Date: _____

Serving where and with what people group: _____

As a cross-cultural minister of the gospel joyfully called to make disciples of Jesus Christ among Muslims:

1. How will you help a new believer express his identity in Christ within his community?
2. In your ministry context, what aspects of the local culture may be retained and which aspects must be rejected?
3. As a minister of the Gospel, how will you communicate your identity in Christ to those among whom you seek to minister?
4. How will you communicate the identity of Jesus in the language and culture of the context in which you minister?
5. What will cross-bearing look like for new believers in your context? Are new believers truly ready to suffer for Christ? How will you prepare them?
6. How will you present the gospel in such a way that Jesus is the stumbling block (not cultural practices, leadership style, dress, customs, habits)?
7. How will you proclaim the gospel with gentleness, respect, and with all boldness in your host context (especially in highly restricted areas)?
8. How will you demonstrate the supreme and exclusive authority of the Bible among peoples who revere other sacred texts as supreme authority?
9. How will you instruct the new believer in Christ regarding his relationship to his community and mosque?
10. How and when will you distinguish the intrinsic differences between God as he is revealed in the Bible and as he is written about in the Qur'an?

Biblical Considerations to Guide Bethlehem's Global Partners

Ministering Among Muslim Peoples

*I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some.
I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.*

1 Cor. 9:22-23

*But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways.
We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open
statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience
in the sight of God.*

2 Cor. 4:2

As a cross-cultural minister of the gospel joyfully called to make disciples of Jesus Christ among Muslims:

1. How will you help a new believer express his identity in Christ within his community?

Biblical considerations: The person who trusts in Christ is a new creation (2Cor 5.17-18). He is one whom God has miraculously rescued out of the darkness of idolatry and rebellion and into His own family (1Peter 2.9) that he might be to the praise of His glory in Christ (Eph. 1.12). The new believer's personal identification with Christ is a declaration of this change of allegiance (1Thess 1.9, cf. 1 Kings 18.21). Ethnic, social, economic, gender and class distinctions are no longer that which primarily defines a new believer's identity (Gal. 3.28-29, 6.15). Rather, for the one who is in Christ, his identity is organically tied to Jesus himself and those elect for whom he died (2 Cor. 6.14). Thus, the new believer's identity is not to be understood in purely individualistic terms, nor simply hidden within former religious community terms, for he is part of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12.13-27). Additional questions to consider:

- What aspects of the culture and former religion should be considered "darkness", from which new believers in Christ should repent and walk in light (1Jn 1.5-7)?
- When does the missiological goal of "staying within one's community," as new believers in Christ, violate Jesus' warnings of loving family more than him (Matthew 10:32-39)?

2. In your ministry context, what aspects of the local culture may be retained and which aspects must be rejected?

Biblical considerations: While ‘culture’ is a morally neutral term, there are positive potentials and intrinsic vulnerabilities in every culture. In a culture that is intimately tied to a religious system, discerning what is to be retained and what is to be rejected is crucial for the clear communication of the gospel – both in the lives of new believers and through their lives to the larger community. The New Birth, allegiance to Christ alone, identification with the local and global expression of Christ’s Church, and the implications of persecution and suffering, are realities that will have a deep impact on this question (Acts 19.17-20). Our emphasis must be the clear communication of the gospel and a clean conscience. We must encourage that which cultivates faith and removes confusion (2 Cor. 4:2; Heb 12.1-2). We must also be careful not to advocate liberties or adherence to former religious practices that would violate the consciences of new believers or cloud the gospel message within his community (Romans 14, 1Cor 8.1-13). Additional question to consider:

- What terminology (or terms of identity) of the surrounding culture is so closely tied to Islam that, if the new believer were to continue using them, would cause other Muslims to believe that the so-called “new believer” is still an adherent to Islam?

3. As a minister of the Gospel, how will you communicate your identity in Christ to those among whom you seek to minister?

Biblical considerations: While there is no biblical mandate to call oneself a “Christian,” our aim is to communicate in a way that honestly and clearly identifies us with the Christ of the Bible (2 Cor. 4.5-6). Language is important (Psalm 19.14; Matt. 16.15-18; 2Cor. 2.17). We must reject any community-dominant religious terminology that would bring reproach upon Christ or call our identity with the God/Christ of the Bible into question (Daniel 3; 2Cor 4.2)

4. How will you communicate the identity of Jesus in the language and culture of the context in which you minister?

Biblical considerations: The identity of Jesus is at the center of the Gospel (Mt. 16.13-18; Acts 4.12). The gospel-writers go to great lengths to show the theological and redemptive-historical significance of titles. Jesus, in fulfillment of prophecy, is the Messiah, the Royal Son of God (cf. Ps. 2; Rom 1.2), and the divine Son of Man (Dan 7.9-14; Lk 21.27ff; Rev. 1.13-16). Jesus is the One by whom, and for whom, all things were created (Col. 1.13-20). The resurrected Christ taught his disciples that only through an understanding of the Old Testament will the deep significance of his death, resurrection, and global proclamation be seen as the apex of all of redemptive history (Lk. 24.44-49). From the beginning of the Church age, the apostles’ task was to communicate these deep realities in different cultures

and contexts – even when the concepts themselves were highly offensive (or ridiculous) to their hearers (1 Cor. 1:18-31).

5. What will cross-bearing look like for new believers in your context? Are new believers truly ready to suffer for Christ? How will you prepare them?

Biblical considerations: While there are many places in the world where visible persecution on account of Christ does not occur, the Bible anticipates suffering as part of every believer's experience (Phil. 1:27-28, 1Pet. 4:12-19). The Apostle Paul experienced great persecution as a missionary and reminded fellow believers that anyone who desired to live for Christ would also be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12). Jesus taught that his followers would experience suffering and persecution on account of him, sometimes coming from their own friends and family (Matt. 10:16-33). When persecution occurs, there must be prayerful discernment whether to stay and endure persecution or to flee from it (Matthew 10:23; Luke 21:21; Acts 9:24-25). The all-surpassing pleasure to be found in Christ is what enables and drives radical self-denial in the life of the believer (Lk. 9:23-26). Additional questions to consider:

- When does “salt lose its saltiness” in your host community (Matt 5:13-17)?
- How is the light of Christ shining, or hidden under a bushel in your host community (Mark 9:42-49)?
- How are God's “chosen ones” proclaiming the excellencies of Him who called them out of darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9)?

6. How will you present the gospel in such a way that Jesus is the stumbling block (not cultural practices, leadership style, dress, customs, habits)?

Biblical considerations: Paul strove to communicate the gospel clearly and compellingly both in his speech and his lifestyle. When his financial support was an obstacle, he made tents to support himself (1 Thess. 2:5-9). His aim was to orient his life in such a way that the only stumbling-block to faith was the message of Jesus crucified (1 Cor. 1:18-31). He rejected the notion of avoiding persecution by adhering to former religious practices (Gal. 6:12-14). Paul's evangelism was grounded in the reality that, though Paul planted and Apollos watered, it was only God who could give the growth (1 Cor. 3:6-7). Because of this precious reality, there was no impetus for Paul to impress people with flawless oratory or esoteric knowledge (1 Cor. 1:17, 2:1-5).

7. How will you proclaim the gospel with gentleness, respect, and with all boldness in your host context (especially in highly restricted areas)?

Biblical considerations: The Apostle Peter writes that, in a hostile environment we should communicate the gospel with gentleness and respect (I Peter 3.15-16). Yet when Peter is dragged before local leadership, beaten, and told not to preach the name of Jesus, he declared “we cannot but tell all that we have seen and heard.” This was followed by fervent prayer with the body of Christ for greater boldness as the word of God was fulfilled (Acts 4.29-30). As ministers of the gospel, we are being sent out as sheep in the midst of wolves (Lk. 10.3). Jesus exhorts us to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10.16) in our gospel-ministry. When we are dragged before religious authorities and secular governors we will have opportunity, in the midst of persecution and physical suffering, to communicate His supremacy. Our confidence is to be in the Father’s promises to give us words to speak by his Spirit (Matt. 10.19-20), and that not even a hair of our head will perish even, if we are put to death (Luke 21:16,18).

8. How will you demonstrate the supreme and exclusive authority of the Bible among peoples who revere other sacred texts as supreme authority?

Biblical considerations: While the New Testament indicates that there is a place for using brief quotations from local religious or cultural literature as a pointer to Christ (Acts 17.23, 28; Titus 1.12), the Apostles were exceedingly careful to show that God’s word alone is the ultimate and authoritative truth (2 Tim 3.16-17). The on-going reverence of any other religious book besides the Bible is unheard of in the NT and runs the risk of subtly affirming the other religious book as equally authoritative to the Bible. We must be careful in our discipleship to distinguish the supreme authority of the Bible above every other writing, striving to communicate the uniqueness of the Word of Christ and its purpose in redemptive history (Jn. 17.17; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Romans 10:17). Additional questions to consider:

- How will the use of the Qur’an in evangelism or discipleship reinforce the sole authority of God’s self-revelation in the Bible? Will using the Qur’an clarify or muddle this issue in the minds of your hearers?-

9. How will you instruct the new believer in Christ regarding his relationship to his community and mosque?

Biblical considerations: The new believer’s understanding of his identity in Christ and the implications of being a new creation and a member of Christ’s body will impact his view of the mosque. Since there are deep redemptive-historical differences between the interaction of the early church with the Jewish synagogue, on the one hand, and the modern church and the Muslim mosque, on the other hand, we should be cautious in treating these

two relationships as parallel. It is important to note that the apostles were very deliberate in their evangelism of ethnic Israel, but as the large-scale Jewish rejection of Jesus grew violent, the believers were scattered and continued to preach the word of Christ and form churches wherever they went (Acts 8:3-4; 9:31; 13:1-3).

Those who are born-again will joyfully accept the call to radical discipleship (Matt 10.37-39; 13.44-45) and, by the Spirit's power, will turn away from former ways of ignorance (1 Peter 1.14-19). This often comes at significant relational cost (Matt 10.34-36), though with great relational reward – and eternal life (Mk 10.29-30). While corporate worship, celebration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, teaching, discipleship and fellowship will happen in the context of his new community -the church- (Acts 2.41-47), there may be occasions when he seeks opportunities to reach his neighbors during certain community functions (which often occur in connection with the mosque). While the distinctions between religion and culture are more evident in Western culture, they nearly vanish in Islam. Thus, while new believers under both paradigms must wrestle with the presuppositions that undergird customary practices, Muslim background believers must be encouraged to consider the way that former practices could disguise or deny gospel-reality. Desires to highlight the sufficiency and uniqueness of Christ should drive wise decision-making (Matt 10.16) as believers seek strategic opportunities to win members of their community. At the same time, cross-cultural workers must also be careful not to violate the consciences of new believers who may want to sever all connections with their former community.

Additional questions to consider:

- What other phrases (e.g. the shahada) or practices (e.g. Friday prayers) could give the false impression to the community that you are Muslim?
- Is participation in the life of the mosque more akin to participation in the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 2.46; 21.24-26) or in the pagan temple (1 Cor 10.14-22)?

10. How and when will you distinguish the intrinsic differences between God as he is revealed in the Bible and as he is written about in the Qur'an?

Biblical considerations: Working from clear common ground, cross-cultural ministers of the gospel should build a thoroughly Biblical understanding of God – his person, character and purpose in history. We must be diligent to discern where theological misunderstanding might occur and presumed areas of connection between Islam and Biblical revelation must be examined in light of Scripture.- At the Areopagus, Paul exemplified such discernment in his evangelism to the Athenians. While being very careful not to identify the God of the Scriptures with the unknown god they venerated,- Paul uses the opportunity to tell them about the true God. He engages them on their terms and creates new categories to challenge their ignorance- categories demanded by God's self-revelation in his Word and consummately in Christ (Acts 17.22-34). He also soundly warned them against continuing in their ignorance – lest they face God's impending judgment (v29-31). In similar fashion, we

must begin by acknowledging what can be acknowledged by all people – namely, that God exists, that creation declares his glory, that his power is real, and that all thanksgiving and honor are due him (Rom 1.19-20). We should also affirm our friend’s earnest desire to know God and move him to comparing his understanding of the god of Islam with what the true God is like – most fully in the person of his Son (Heb 1.1-12).

Additional questions to consider:

- › From what common ground will you start in order to show Muslims the true God?
- › How does Islam understand sin? How does it account for human sin if original sin is denied?
- › How does Islam regard the holiness of God? If sin is arbitrarily forgiven, can God be holy?
- › Which is the more apt biblical parallel, Islam and second-temple Judaism (i.e. the synagogue, Acts 13.14-42) or Islam and paganism (i.e. Acts 17.22-34)?
- › Finally, the Arabic Bible, which pre-dates the Qur’an, does use the term Allah for God. But is it therefore Biblically-justified for us to conclude that (in essence, nature, and character) Christians worship the same God as Muslims?

Appendix 8: BBC Covenant

Bethlehem Baptist Church Covenant

1. Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and, supreme Treasure of our lives, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.
2. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and peace; to promote its spirituality and fruitfulness; to sustain its worship, ordinances, and discipline; to welcome, and test biblically, instruction from the Scriptures by the elders of the church which accords with the *Elder Affirmation of Faith*, seeking to grow toward biblical unity in the truth; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.
3. We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.
4. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.
5. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a likeminded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.
6. We acknowledge that implicit within this covenant is the consent to be governed by the *Relational Commitments* that have been officially adopted by the church and that address peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, marriage and divorce, counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children.

Appendix 9: BBC Congregational Affirmation of Faith

Congregational Affirmation of Faith

I. The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

II. The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three person; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

Genesis 1:1,26; John 1:1,3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19,20; Ephesians 4:5,6

III. God 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.

Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

IV. 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 personal visible return to earth.

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16

V. The Holy Spirit

We believe in 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.

John 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

VI. Regeneration

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life.

Genesis. 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Eccl. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9; Rev. 19:3,20; 20:10;14,15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

VII. The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

VIII. Christian Conduct

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15,23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Col. 1:9-10

IX. The Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26

X. Religious Liberty

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9,12

XI. Church Cooperation

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time.

Acts 15:36,41; 16:5; I Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:1-3; Revelations 1:4,10,11

This church is affiliated with the Minnesota Baptist Conference and Converge Worldwide, and may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

XII. The Last Things

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked.

Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6,11-15

Appendix 10: Qualifications for Elders and Deacons

Qualifications for Elders and Deacons

Self-controlled	Elder	I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8
Hospitable	Elder	I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8
Able to teach	Elder	I Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9
Not violent but gentle	Elder	I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7
Not quarrelsome	Elder	I Tim. 3:3
Not a lover of money	Elder	I Tim. 3:3
Not a recent convert	Elder	I Tim. 3:6
Has a good reputation with outsiders	Elder	I Tim. 3:7
Not overbearing	Elder	Titus 1:7
Not quick-tempered	Elder	Titus 1:7
Loves what is good	Elder	Titus 1:8
Upright, holy	Elder	Titus 1:8
Disciplined	Elder	Titus 1:8
Above reproach (blameless)	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:2, 9; Titus 1:6
Temperate	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:2, 8; Titus 1:7
Respectable	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:2, 8
Not given to drunkenness	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7
Husband of one wife	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6
Manages his own family well	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:4, 12
See that his children obey him	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6
Does not pursue dishonest gain	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:7
Keeps hold of the deep truths	Elder/Deacon	I Tim. 3:9; Titus 1:9
Sincere	Deacon	I Tim. 3:8
Tested	Deacon	I Tim. 3:10

Appendix 11: Barnabas Teams

Barnabas Teams

*"You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.
For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.
Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth."
3 John 6b-8*

Bethlehem is a church that loves the glory of God and the fame of his name. Because of this, we are committed to being a church that sends our Global Partners in a manner worthy of God, for they have gone out for the sake of his name. Sending these Global Partners well means seriously and substantially supporting them – not only financially, but emotionally, relationally, and spiritually.

But with so many Global Partners, how can this happen? Bethlehem currently has more than 100 Global Partner households and approximately 100 more persons in the Nurture Program. The church's Global Outreach staff cannot sufficiently "care" for all these people alone. Nor can the dozen or so people on each of the campus Global Outreach (GO) Teams accomplish this massive task by themselves.

This is why the GO Team requires all long-term Global Partners to have a Bethlehem-based Barnabas Team. In this way we hope to mobilize the Bethlehem faith family to more fully meet the needs of our Global Partners and to be active fellow workers with them for the truth. We take seriously the demands of 3 John 8: "We ought to support people like these..." "We" means all of us – the whole church. "Ought" means supporting those who have gone out is not optional for us. Barnabas Teams are one way we seek to provide an opportunity for members of Bethlehem who don't go out, to fulfill their calling to be passionate senders.

Throughout their existence, Barnabas Teams have proven to be an essential part of the global outreach efforts at Bethlehem and a key way that the body loves and cares for its members who have gone out for the sake of the name.

What is a Barnabas Team?

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

The name “Barnabas” comes from the man described in Acts 9:27 and 11:22-26. His name literally means “Son of Encouragement.” It was Barnabas who was Paul’s advocate before the church after Paul’s conversion. He was Paul’s 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 encouraging partner in ministry that everyone would want on his or her team.

What does a Barnabas Team do?

In a nutshell, a Barnabas Team works together with the GO Team to care for their global partner, working to help meet their spiritual, physical and emotional needs. To a large extent, this will happen to the degree that the global partner is willing and able to make his needs known to the team. The specific ways in which a Barnabas Team goes about meeting their global partners’ needs will vary depending on the specific personality and needs of the global partner, as well as the personality (creativity and gifting) of the team. This doesn't mean that the Barnabas Team does everything, but they do take personal responsibility to serve as that global partner’s advocate at Bethlehem. During times of crisis, conflict, or significant concern, the Barnabas Team would contact a GO Team member from the partner’s campus.

(For some practical ideas of what Barnabas teams do, see below.)

How are Barnabas Teams formed?

Ideally, members of a Barnabas Team are prayerfully chosen by the global partner. Some global partners ask members of their small group, Sunday School class, or other church relationships to come together to form their team. Others have asked their small group itself to also function as their Barnabas Team. Everyone on the team does not have to be from Bethlehem, but the majority should be and the designated leader must be. Teams work best when the global partner chooses people with whom they can be "real".

At times, the Barnabas Team team might need to recruit additional members as some teammates move away or are unable to commit to continuing to serve on the team. The more the global partner can be involved in this, the better. Often, however, teams will ask the GO Dept. to help find new members. In this case, it’s important for both the team and the global partner to welcome the new members in and bring them up to speed as best they can so the new member can truly care well for the partner.

What’s expected of a Barnabas Team member?

We ask that every Barnabas Team member make a commitment to:

- A specific term length. Commit to being on the team for at least one year or preferably the length of the global partner’s term.
- Meet as a team on a monthly or bimonthly basis or as special needs arise.
- Try to attend the annual Midwest Conference on Missionary Care (held in Feb. in Twin Cities).

- Pray for your global partner often, individually as well as corporately; read their emails, blog, letters.
- Correspond regularly with your global partner by way of emails, letters, phone calls, or Skype.
- Work to create an atmosphere where your global partner feels safe and comfortable to share himself very personally with the team -- keeping confidential concerns confidential.
- Be available to provide practical care for your global partner (see below for specific ideas).

How do Barnabas Teams work?

Various Barnabas Teams have organized themselves differently, depending on the gifts of the individuals involved. Many teams have found 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 duties as needed:

(Note: It's not necessary that a team have all these roles assigned. These are merely suggestions. Teams are encouraged to organize themselves however it works best for them and their global partner.)

- **Team Leader** – This is the person who calls, organizes, and leads team meetings. They should seek ways to help grow the team's understanding of missionary care. One way this happens is by the leader attending twice-annual Barnabas Team Leader Meetings. Their role is also to help and encourage others in the fulfillment of their assigned roles and find replacements in the event of change. Lastly, the team leader serves as the primary contact person between BBC (specifically the GO Team) and the Barnabas Team.
- **Meeting Coordinator** – Whether the meetings are held in this person's home or not, their role is to facilitate its occurrence. This may include working with the team leader to coordinate meeting places and times, necessary equipment for meeting (i.e. internet connection, video camera, greeting cards to sign, etc...), and refreshments if so desired. The meeting coordinator will also work with the care coordinator to find a host home should their global partner come for a visit.
- **Prayer Coordinator** – Though all team members are responsible to pray individually for their global partner, this coordinator serves at least two further roles. First, they think beyond the stated prayer requests given by the global partner and determine appropriate Scriptures and requests that also may be prayed. Second, they are responsible for preparing, focusing, and leading the corporate prayer time at the team meeting.
- **Communications Coordinator** – This is the team member who takes the lead in writing to the global partner, sending care packages, assist in sending prayer letters, and passing along information to the church. Though each member of the team should receive prayer letters and be in communication, this team member makes

that their service priority. If an emergency arises, they should make sure to contact all team members and their campus's GO Team immediately.

- › **Care Coordinator** – Whether the global partner is on home assignment or elsewhere, this team member is available to listen intently and patiently. As well as being available to listen, the care coordinator may find humble ways to encourage the spiritual life of the global partner and foster their wellbeing as they go through the re-entry process upon home assignment. If the team serves a missionary couple it may be good to have two care members on the team.

Practical ideas for caring for your global partners

Before They Go

- › Ask them what their needs are (materially and spiritually), and pray earnestly for them.
- › Educate yourself about the country they are going to and the people they will be working among so that you can more intelligently pray for them, discuss and understand their plans, and advocate for them.
- › Be available for them. Encourage them as their emotions fluctuate or change just before they go.
- › Help them find information on needed equipment by reading product reviews, discussing with others, etc..
- › Ask them about what they're learning as God takes them down the path that will lead them to a foreign country.
- › Help them get all the supplies they'll 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. Offer to store things for them.
- › 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 BBC after their formal church commissioning.

While They're Gone

- › Pray earnestly for them.

- Write to your global partner often without expecting frequent or lengthy responses.
- Keep up to date with what your global partner is doing so that you can encourage them in the work and share their work with the BBC family.
- Remember their birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and other special days with a card, gift, emails, Skype or telephone call.
- Keep the partner up to date with information on their BT (changes in who's on it, contact info, etc.)
- 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 BBC prayer meeting times.
- Send fun "care packages" occasionally to encourage your global partner or to help meet some of their needs.
- Keep your global partner updated with events in the life of Bethlehem. Partners often feel very disconnected to the life of their church back home.
- Consider visiting your global partner on the field. (There is possible financial assistance available)
- Send them a good book you've especially appreciated or a gift certificate for an e-book.
- Mail out their prayer letters for them.
- Help to take care of your global partner's home, vehicle, etc. while they are away.

While They're Home

- Pray earnestly for them.
- Mail out their prayer letters.
- Be at the airport to welcome them home.
- Host an open house at BBC for them so that they can update and celebrate God's grace with the body.
- Praise the Lord with them for how God used them overseas.
- Be their small group if they are in the Twin Cities regularly and want that fellowship.
- 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 in their refrigerator and cupboards so they don't have to go shopping right away.
- Bring dinner by their house the first few days.
- Help them find a car to borrow during their time at home. Provide auto maintenance if needed.
- Give them a special night out or some other special treat.
- Offer to babysit for them.
- Listen to them; be available; show interest in their ministry and overseas life.
- Include them in social activities.
- Offer vacation possibilities.

- › Help them to catch up with what is current, what's in and what's out.
- › Introduce them to new people at BBC.
- › Help them to get caught up on the latest happenings here at BBC.
- › Introduce the children to other children their age.
- › Give them space as needed.

Appendix 12: Evaluating Missions Agencies

Guidelines on Evaluating Missions Agencies

Be realistic in the number of mission agencies you want to seriously explore. A study done in 2003 revealed that there are more than 700 mission agencies based in the U.S. There is great diversity among these agencies which will help you make a decision about the ones you want to consider. Some agencies will be eliminated for you because of: 1) your specific calling -- vocational and geographical; 2) church affiliation; 3) short-term experience; and 4) exposure to various boards through missionaries you know.

Some ways to get information about various mission agencies are as follows: write and ask for literature, statements on policy, and doctrine; correspond with mission staff and missionaries from a particular agency; read periodicals, prayer letters and biographies; go to Urbana and talk to the agencies represented. Also, many mission agencies have what they call an initial or preliminary questionnaire. Filling this out does not obligate you, but it does let the mission know you are interested and tells them about who you are so they can answer questions more fully.

In addition to the above there are several options available locally to help you start initial contact with various mission agencies:

Almost every mission agency has a web site with extensive information on their organization. Using an internet search engine will help you find them or contact the Global Outreach (GO) Department for assistance.

Several mission agencies have representatives of their agencies based in the Twin Cities area and they are very eager to have contact with people just like you!

Talk to people who have gone through the process themselves (candidates under appointment, furloughing missionaries, etc.).

Points to Consider in Evaluating Mission Agencies:

Doctrine

Ask to receive a copy of their formal doctrinal statement. Make sure they are Biblically sound in their doctrine. Notice if the statement is broad or narrow in its outline and how it will therefore affect everyday life and ministry practices. Find out whether or not there are any individual variances among the mission's representatives or missionaries. Is there harmony among the missionaries on doctrinal issues? Look at their distinctives and those of their people and supporters. What's their view of God, man, the church, spiritual gifts and missions? Are there any theological distinctives that set them apart from other Christian organizations? Do they cooperate with those who hold to other positions on those issues? How do you feel about their answers?

Emphasis and Scope of Ministry

Find out what kinds of things they are doing (evangelism, nurture or service) - what is their ministry and to whom? Does their approach to ministry emphasize flexibility and spontaneity, or stability and structured objectives? Are they people-oriented (evangelizing, nurturing or serving people through a variety of programs) or task-oriented (specialists in radio broadcasting, literature production, for example)? How do they view the roles of men and women in ministry? Could you see yourself fitting into an agency with their philosophy? What are their goals, both long and short term? Are they broad or narrow? That is, are they focused or general or both? Who sets the goals - the field, the missionaries, the nationals, the representatives, the home office? How are they evaluated? By whom? What will your role be in goal-setting -- will you have any significant influence?

Geographical Extent

What are the geographical perimeters and how were they set? Was it strategic, purposeful or accidental? Are they static or dynamic? Are there dreamers in the mission who give vision? Are they over-extended? Has the extent grown, shrunk, or remained the same in the last ten years? What do they see for the next decade? Is there coordination and harmony among the fields? In what countries do they place missionaries? Would you work in English or would you need a second language? Do they work with people culturally similar to you, or very different? What place does “unreached peoples” play in their strategy and priorities?

History

Do they have good understanding of where they've been? How does the past influence their future - by choice or default? What do they feel about their history? How do they evaluate it? Do they want to share it? Here are some ways to find out about their history: read any books the founder wrote or any biographies written about him; read articles written about this mission in mission magazines; read old prayer letters and literature you find; view any films made about the mission; ask for a history of the churches they've established; talk to any retired missionaries. It is important to find out about history - you will be asked about it by others once you are a part of the mission.

Reputation

What is their reputation locally -- among churches, other mission boards, supporters? What is it overseas? What do the nationals think about it? The churches they established? What does the foreign government think about them? Does the agency have a good reputation with other mission agencies, with the national churches with whom they work, with personnel within the agency, etc. Are they a part of IFMA (Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association) or EFMA (Evangelical Foreign Missions Association) or ECFA (Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability)?

Administration

Who does what in terms of mission staff? Are their levels of authority clear and organized? Can you work well where you'll be assigned? Who sets the policies - a board, the

missionaries, national churches, supporters, a combination? Is it clear? Organized? What are the costs of administration - how much of your support will they want to keep to help meet these costs? Can you endorse and justify that cost wholeheartedly?

Finances

Are missionaries on salaries (denominations sometimes give salaries and so do relief organizations) or do they raise support? If they raise support do they need to raise a set amount before they can leave for the field, (promised support) or do they go in faith that the Lord will meet their needs, and raise no support? If they raise a set amount, does that support go toward their needs only (promised support) or do they share it with all the missionaries in the mission (pooled support)? At what level do the missionaries live when compared to the local people? How much pressure on you to raise funds?

Candidate Qualifications

What are they? Can you find out up front - can you get the whole picture or do you find out bits at a time? Be realistic - how long has it taken others to meet these qualifications? Why are they necessary? Do they provide assistance to help meet these? How firm are they - for instance, if you need a certain amount of education do you need to get it from a specific place, any accredited place, or will TBI's classes help? Have the qualifications always been there or do they change? Are they stringent enough to not accept just anyone, but only people who will do good work - and who you could work with?

Training/Education

What is required? Is there field orientation? Candidate school? Do they have specific training for language and culture learning (Missionary Training International, Brewster, Larson, Smalley . . .)? Do they allow for or encourage on-going education?

Placement

How are you placed on the field? Who makes that decision? Do you have the final say or does someone else? How, when, or how often is it evaluated? Is it reversible? Flexible? How soon does the mission want you to move on?

Personnel

What kind of people are they looking for - team players or pioneers? What kind of people do they become? Are missionaries satisfied with the mission? What's the dropout or turnover rate? What are the unwritten rules for lifestyle/strategy, etc.? Do they function well as a team? Are they caring well for missionaries' emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs?

Family

How does the mission care for the whole family -- both parent and child? Do they see family as 1st or 2nd priority or as one that shifts between the two? Do they care for children as children and as current and maybe future missionaries? What educational opportunities are

there for children – home schooling, correspondence, boarding school or local public schooling? What living standards are expected of their missionaries? Is this the environment you want?

Prayer

Ultimately the question is not whether you find the perfect mission agency (there are none) but whether this is the mission agency God wants you to serve with. So bathe the exploration process in prayer. God will lead you!